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133

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ISSUE 133 WELCOME



Welcome to the latest issue of **Advanced Photoshop**. This issue, we take a look at the pro skills you need to achieve incredible photo artwork, from hyper-realistic to imaginative imagery.

APRIL MADDEN
Editor

IN THIS ISSUE:

- ADVERTISING DESIGN
- INFOGRAPHICS
- PHOTOMANIPULATION
- DIGITAL PAINTING
- TYPOGRAPHY

COVER IMAGE

JAREK KUBICKI
www.kubicki.info

Award-winning artist, photographer and creative director Jarek Kubicki has created websites, branding, industrial design, books and album covers, and founded graphic studio Insania Evidens.



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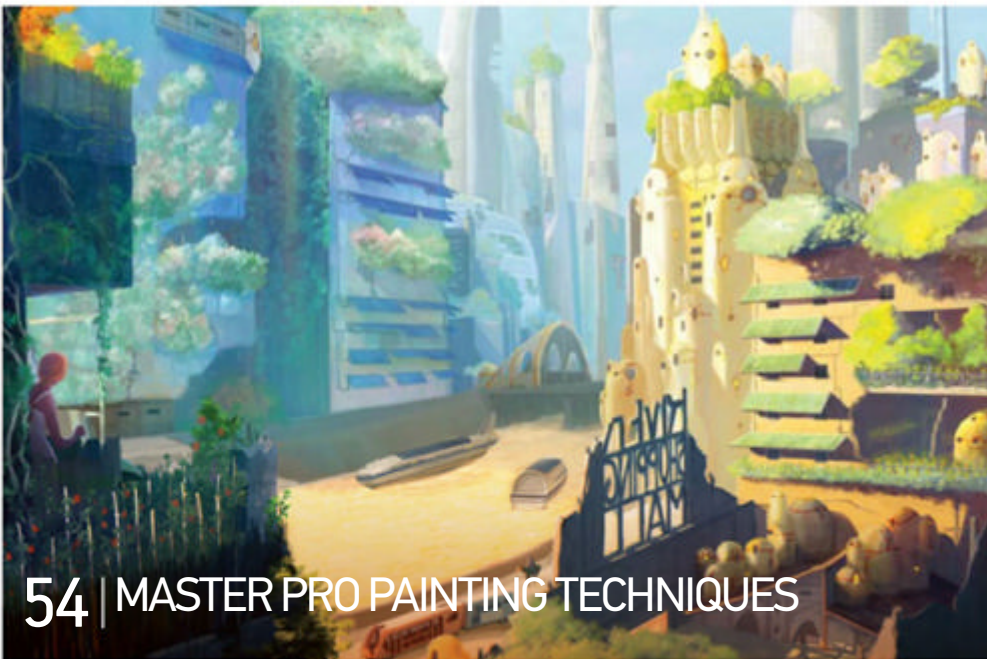
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Professional artists reveal their high-end Photoshop skills in our easy-to-follow workshops

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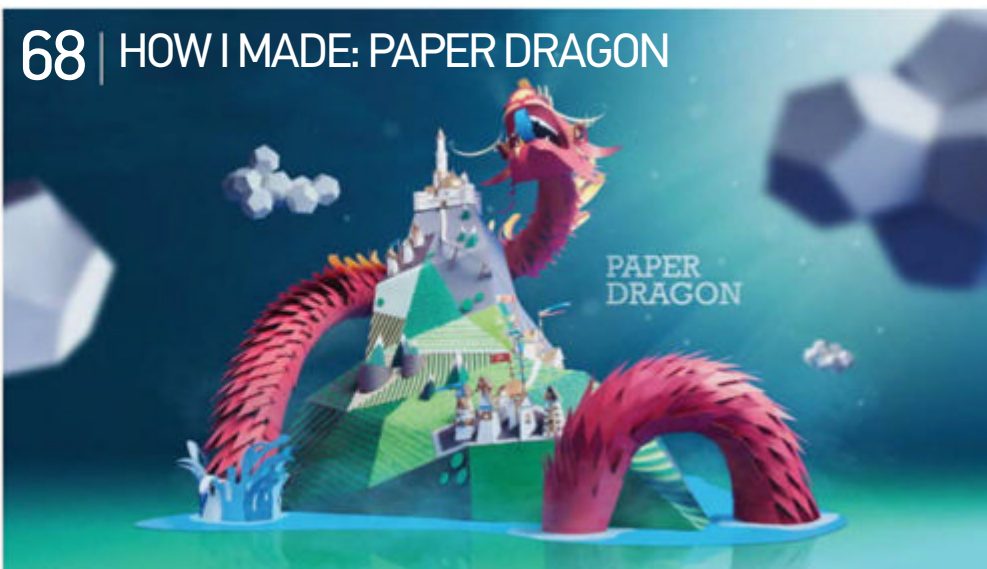
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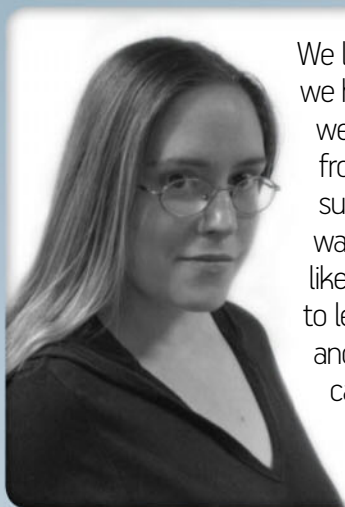


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We love creating **Advanced Photoshop** and we hope you love reading it too. That's why we're asking you to tell us what you want from your magazine. Our quick three-minute survey lets you tell us exactly what you want to see, from the kind of artwork you like to the Photoshop techniques you want to learn. Share your opinions with us today and make a difference to your magazine. We can't wait to see your thoughts!

APRIL MADDEN
Editor

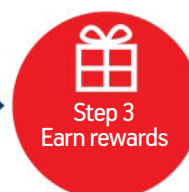
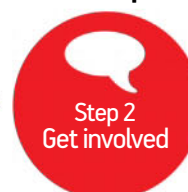


At work: The Advanced Photoshop team making the magazine look beautiful



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- Test third-party products for review
- Get a chance to meet the Advanced Photoshop team
- Shape the future issues of the magazine
- Enter into exclusive competitions



Planning: The Advanced Photoshop team planning future issues of the mag



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ADVANCED PHOTOSHOP® PRO PANEL

MEET THE PROFESSIONALS SHARING THEIR PHOTOSHOP
EXPERTISE AND TECHNIQUES IN THIS ISSUE

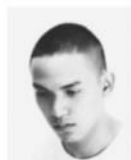
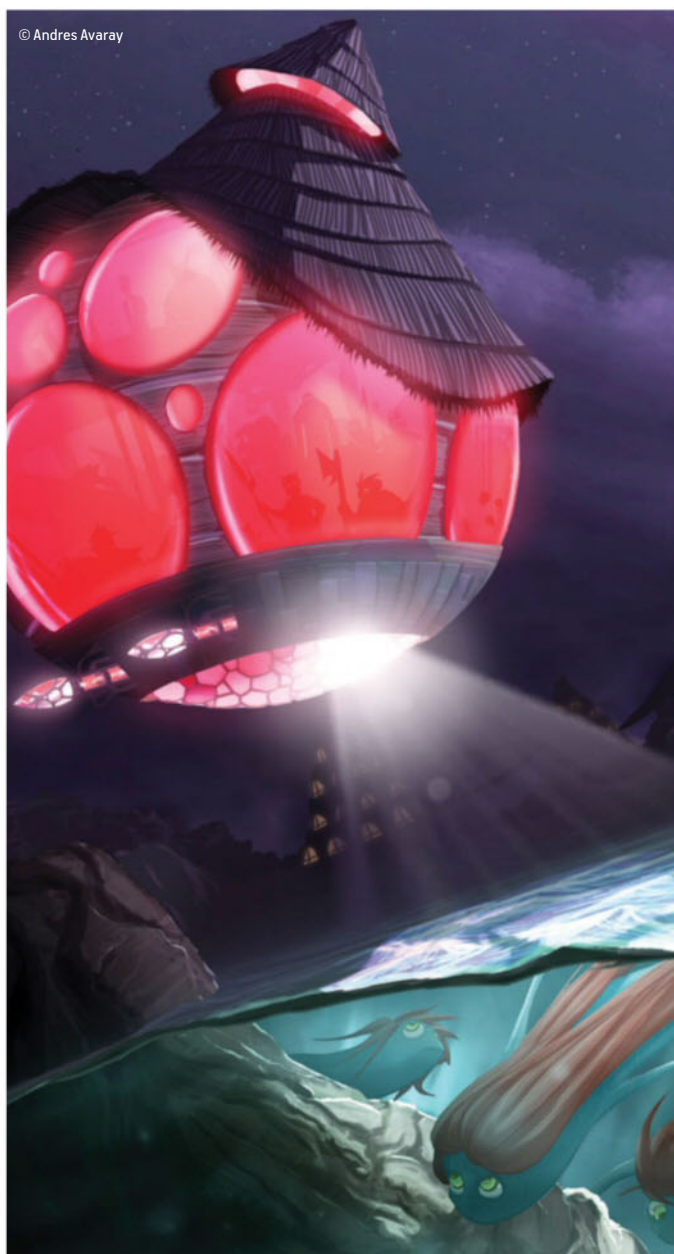


ANDRES AVARAY

www.avaray.com

Gradient and Color Overlay layer styles should always be used in a subtle way when working on a digital painting. Keeping opacities very low and playing with blending modes makes a wide variety of resources available that will boost your base painting work, generating interesting contrast, transition and optical effects.

■ Find out more about Andres Avaray's painting techniques in his tutorial on p54



MOE PIKE SOE

www.be.net/moepike

Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. There are many tools and apps you can use to increase your productivity. For example, this artwork is shot on an iPhone, illustrated in Photoshop, and post-processed back on the iPhone. With new tools becoming available every day, there are countless ways to get more creative and productive.

■ Find out more about Moe Pike Soe's workflow and how he creates amazing images on p38

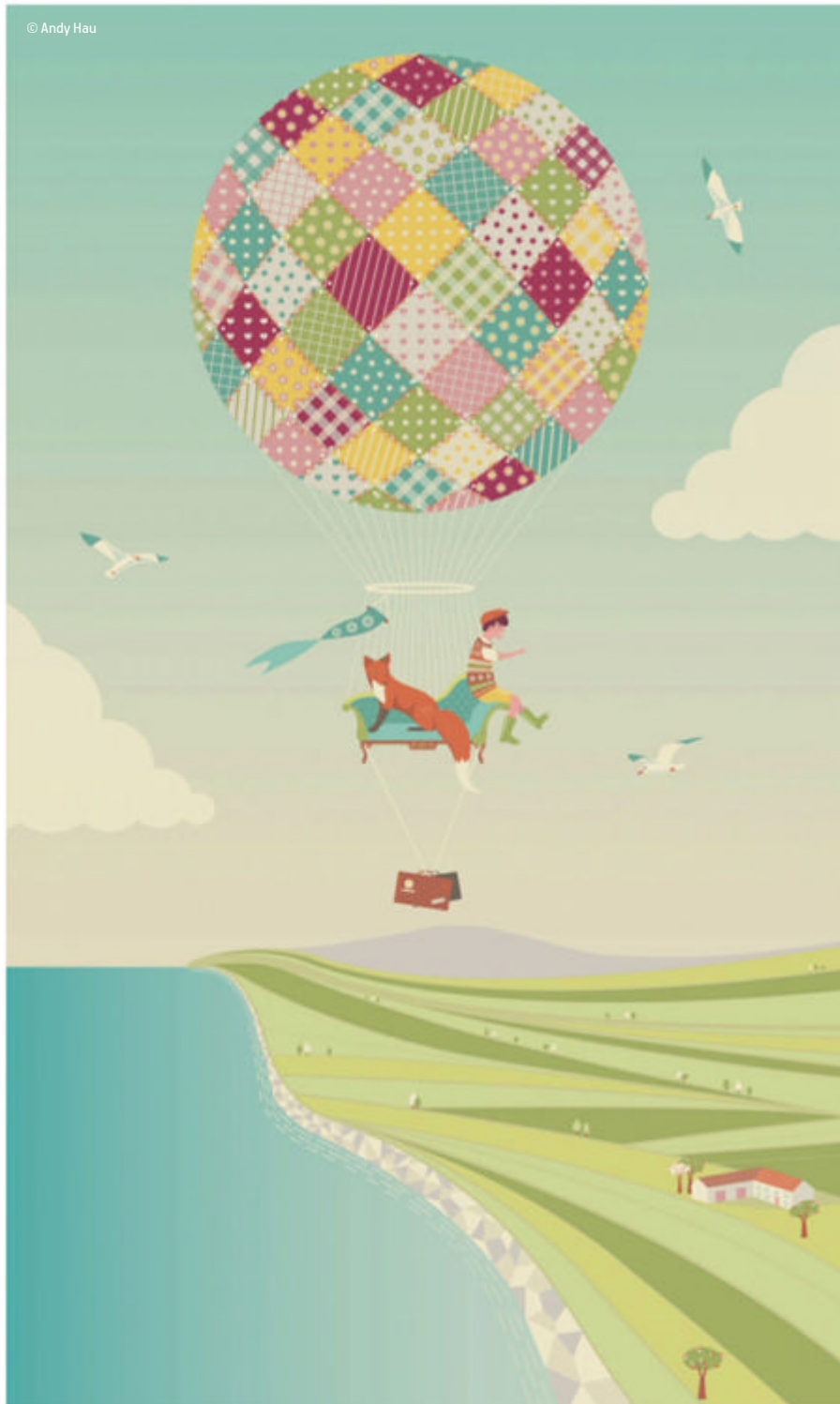




ANDY HAU
www.andyhau.com

It's a designer's prerogative to change their mind. By default, Photoshop's History panel only lists the previous 20 states, which is not particularly useful when you've gone a bit overboard with the Brush tool. To change this, go to Edit>Preferences>Performance to change the number of History states up to a maximum of 1000. However, this may have an effect on performance.

■ Join Andy for a masterclass in special effect typography in his tutorial on p62



© Andy Hau

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PHOTOSHOP TURNS 25

WITH SUCH AN IMPORTANT BIRTHDAY THIS YEAR FOR OUR FAVOURITE DIGITAL CREATIVITY TOOL, WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE MOST EXCITING WAYS IN WHICH PHOTOSHOP HAS EVOLVED AND WHAT TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN THE FUTURE

It's incredible to think that a mere 25 years ago, a piece of software as important today as Photoshop didn't even exist. From its humble beginnings as a simple program to showcase grayscale images on a black-and-white monitor by brothers Thomas and John Knoll in 1987, Photoshop has changed the digital world as we know it, growing into one of the most powerful innovations in art and design since the paintbrush itself. It's become a cultural icon, redefining creativity in a new digital age.

Today, virtually all the inspirational images we see – from the logo on our morning coffee cup to the app on our iPhones and even the Hollywood blockbuster showing in cinemas – have been touched by Photoshop. It's one of the most recognised software brands in the world, with tens of millions of users. The tools like Layers, the Healing Brush, Content Aware Fill and Camera Raw are commonly known by anyone interested in the image creation process. Even non-creatives know and recognise Photoshop.

"For 25 years, Photoshop has inspired artists and designers to craft images of stunning beauty and reality-bending creativity," said Shantanu Narayen, Adobe president and chief executive officer. "From desktop publishing, to fashion photography, movie production, website design, mobile app creation and now 3D printing, Photoshop continues to redefine industries and creative possibilities. And today that Photoshop magic is available to millions."

To celebrate Photoshop turning 25, Adobe plans to showcase 25 of the most creative visual artists under 25 who use Photoshop today in its '25 under 25' campaign. The company also launched an advertising campaign called *Dream On* during The Academy Awards – all as a tribute to the incredible artists and years of work that Photoshop has been able to inspire, and of course, Thomas and John Knoll, the visionaries who started it all.



THE SEARCH FOR 25 UNDER 25

ADOBE IS OFFICIALLY LOOKING FOR THE 25 BEST PHOTOSHOP ARTISTS UNDER 25 YEARS OF AGE. ARE YOU ONE OF THEM?

It's always incredibly impressive when you are inspired by the work of a brand-new Photoshop artist – particularly if that artist happens to still be in their early twenties or even just a teenager, still developing their style and at the beginning of their career. For the team at Adobe, a new objective is to find the best of the best of the artists who do exactly that. To celebrate Photoshop's 25th anniversary, Adobe has decided to search for the most incredible in the next generation of Photoshop creators to inspire the rest of the digital world.

In the coming months, the Photoshop team will be scouring the globe to find a unique selection of 25 of the most creative visual artists under 25.

"We're looking for the most innovative, forward-looking work out there that will show the world what the next generation of Photoshop artists is made of," wrote Lex van den Berge, senior product manager of digital imaging at Adobe, on Adobe's official Photoshop blog introducing their new search. "These 25 game changers will be from all parts of the world, and their art will represent their diverse cultures, life experiences, points of view and dreams... All brought to life with the help of Photoshop." Could this be you, someone you know, or even an artist you've admired?

Adobe is looking for visionaries with the ability to inspire the masses through a unique artistic perspective – and of course a proven ability to create



The First Photoshop Image: Jennifer in Paradise, the first Photoshop image ever created of Jennifer Walters (now Jennifer Knoll) in Bora Bora, August 1988

THE PHOTOSHOP TIMELINE

1987 University of Michigan PhD student Thomas Knoll begins writing a program on his Macintosh Plus to display grayscale images on a monochrome display. His brother John Knoll, an Industrial Light & Magic pioneer, recommended that Thomas turn it into a fully-fledged image editing program and began to collaborate with him

1990 Photoshop 1.0 is released on the 19th of February, 1990.

1992 Photoshop 2.5 released in November; adds Windows version.



2000 Support for vector shapes introduced with the release of Photoshop 6.0 released. The first cameraphone is introduced. First working human organ is 3D printed.



1988 Adobe decides to purchase the license to distribute in September.



1991 Photoshop added to dictionary as a verb meaning "to manipulate or alter a digital image". Kodak launched first DSLR, the DCS 100.

1994 Photoshop 3.0 released; Adds layers and features to help customers in medicine and science.



2002 Photoshop 7.0 released, includes Adobe Camera Raw.

visually stunning Photoshop work. They'll be monitoring projects that are tagged and will be in touch with any questions. If you're a young Photoshop user who wants to be noticed by Adobe and by the world – this is an opportunity not to be missed. Enter today to be part of a list that everyone is looking to see who the upcoming artistic starts of the next generation will turn out to be! You have nothing to lose.

Make sure you let the Adobe team see your work or the work of the other talented young artists you know. To apply you must be under the age of 25 and use Photoshop within any aspect of your creative process.

Here's how to make sure Adobe sees your work:

- Create a Behance profile
 - Go to **Behance.net**
 - Enter your Adobe ID or get an Adobe ID
 - Add a project to your profile
 - Tag the project with 'Ps25Under25' in the Project tags section in Step 3: Settings when uploading your finished project
 - Make sure you publish your project
- Learn more about Adobe's 25 Under 25 campaign, and what it will take to be noticed, at blogs.adobe.com/photoshopdotcom/2015/01/25-under-25

“We're looking for the most innovative, forward-looking work out there that will show the world what the next generation of Photoshop artists is made of”

Lex van den Berge, senior product manager of digital imaging, Adobe

CREATIVE TRENDS IN 2015

SHUTTERSTOCK HAS RELEASED ITS 2015 CREATIVE TRENDS REPORT, WHICH ANALYSED ALL THE SEARCHES DONE ON THE STOCK MEDIA COMPANY'S WEBSITE TO FIND TRENDS IN THE YEAR AHEAD

Compiled out of data from all the 2014 downloads and searches on the more than 47 million images, video clips, and music tracks on Shutterstock, the 2015 Creative Trends report introduces some very surprising novelties to look out for in the future.

Global trends include blurred backgrounds which offer texture and colour without distracting from a focal point – something that is now used by brands like Apple and Pinterest. Searches incorporating the word 'blur' have in fact increased by an incredible 144 per cent year on year. Unique perspectives are also popular – such as the 'top view' perspective first seen in Squarespace's well-known ad campaign positioning everything from the point of view of the maker. Creative professionals are ever-increasingly searching for these innovative ways to reposition familiar objects.



Blurred Backgrounds: Backgrounds that showcase texture and colour without distracting from the focal point of an image are an important trend to look out for in 2015

The Linear style was also frequently revisited, with searches for line icons alone increasing 921 per cent year on year. Evolved from flat design, this style is often used to create rounded, more approachable looking icon sets.

Meanwhile, global trends specific to the design industry have also shifted. Popular Shutterstock searches in 2014 included the use of Double Exposure, with cyclical trends also allowing vintage seals, labels and logos to frequently reappear in design. The Low Poly style, which has roots in geometric trends and 3D animation, has also been searched for 431 per cent more year on year. Most surprising, however, has to be Zentangle – an impressively detailed hand-drawn aesthetic featuring neat, almost mathematical patterns. It's a style many people have seen, but never heard of.



Unique Perspectives: Using unique perspectives is another trend, first popularised by the 'top view' perspective seen in Squarespace's well-known ad campaign positioning everything from the point of view of the maker

SPLASH SCREEN TIMELINE

Photoshop Splash screens and Icons throughout the years. In addition to Photoshop, applications like Adobe Illustrator, InDesign, Premiere Pro, After Effects, Dreamweaver and others have also pushed creativity forward for artists, designers and illustrators.



2005

CS2 is released, expanding on a huge number of tools and features including an upgraded Spot Healing brush, the implementation of Smart Objects, and the Vanishing Point and Image Warping tools. The File Browser was upgraded to Adobe Bridge.

2010

CS5 introduces the Content Aware Fill, Refine Edge, Mixer Brush, Bristle Tips and Puppet Warp. CS5 extended also includes other features such as 3D and video editing. Surgeons implant 3D pelvis.



2013

Adobe launches Creative Cloud in May. Photoshop is now available as part of a Creative Cloud subscription, the full version of which costs \$49 every month. Features include the new Smart Sharpen, Intelligent upsampling, and Camera Shake Reduction. Version 14.2 also included Perspective Warp, Linked Smart Objects, and 3D Printing support.

2003

The first Photoshop Creative Suite is commercially released. It features Shadows and Highlights as well as Lens Blur support.

2007

CS3 is released, introducing new features such as the Clone Source palette, Fill Light and Dust Busting tools. CS3 Extended is introduced. Both are offered as either a standalone application or as a part of the Adobe Creative Suite.



2012

CS6 is released, introduces auto and background saves. Kodak files for bankruptcy on January 12th.



2014

Photoshop CC 2014 adds 3D Printing support, content-aware tools, two new blur tools and a focus mask feature which allows users to select parts of the image based on whether they are in focus or not.



Aleksei Kostyuk
www.visio-art.de

POWERFUL VISIONS

BE AMAZED BY ALEKSEI KOSTYUK'S INCREDIBLE ARTWORK THAT BLENDS AWE-INSPIRING TECHNIQUES WITH HIS UNIQUE TAKE ON THE WORLD

German artist Aleksei Kostyuk's work is sometimes disturbing, sometimes humorous, but always arresting and stunningly executed. His Photoshop visions harbour religious undertones, looking to a utopian future as well as offering us his own take on current issues and how he sees the world. For Kostyuk, Photoshop is the core tool in his substantial arsenal – but the artist is also an accomplished photographer (as you can see in his work) and is busy experimenting with 3D in both Photoshop and the powerful modelling tool, ZBrush. Whether it's close-ups of disturbing or beautiful characters or atmospheric vistas, Kostyuk can do it all. We caught up with him to talk style, ideas and what Photoshop has done for him.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AS AN ARTIST. WHERE DID YOU STUDY AND HOW DID YOU GET INTO DIGITAL ART?

It all started back when I was in the seventh grade and I had to do an internship. I decided to go on a

placement at a graphic design agency. And it was there, for the first time, that I came into contact with Photoshop and started using it. It was great, I did not know what I was doing but it was huge fun. Since that moment I knew that I would do [it] for a living. So I've now spent a lot of time with Photoshop. My degree in graphic design at the Macromedia Akademie in Munich furthered my skills and made me as an artist.

HOW WOULD YOU SUM UP YOUR STYLE? AND HOW HAS IT DEVELOPED OR CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

It's a very good question, and I have no 'name' as such for my style – mainly because I'm trying not to commit to a certain style and [I] experiment

constantly. That said, my style has definitely changed over the years. At the start of my career, many of my images had a hand-drawn or painted look. Then I started to be little more photo-realistic in my work. At the moment I'm trying to learn 3D and mix this with Photoshop. But in the end everything is mixed together, and it always comes out as something new.

WHAT'S YOUR PROCESS? HOW DO YOU START A PIECE AND WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE OR MOST COMMONLY USED TECHNIQUES?

First, I obviously need a rough idea. Then I begin to think about the concept and start to develop a moodboard. For this I often hunt around Pinterest,

“I'll often try many different stock images as a starting point – I am adamant that you should not always settle for the 'next best' image and make sure you spend some time to find exactly the right one for the piece”



Pump up the Color: "A mix of 3D modelling and Photoshop," says Kostyuk. "The colour on the page comes to life"

All images © Aleksei Kostyuk 2015

The Guardians: This personal piece was a present from Kostyuk to his wife



“I think it’s good when people see some of my personality or just something that interests them in my pictures – I’d [be] very sad if this was not the case”

You’re Next: This image was a bit of 3D practice for Kostyuk. The model was sculpted in ZBrush with compositing and texturing done in Photoshop





Visum: A wallpaper created for the Desktopography 2014 Exhibition

“I’m not concerned about being different or standout. I just try to be myself and that’s enough for me”



Last Stand: Inspired by sci-fi movies, Last Stand is one of Kostyuk's most elaborate images – the artist combined many different techniques such as 3D, photography and digital brushwork

▶ there is so much inspiration on offer. When I have a concrete idea in my mind and a raft of inspiration, I'll start searching for stock images that form the basis of the work. Of course, I'll often try many different stock images as a starting point – I am adamant that you should not always settle for the 'next best' image and make sure you spend some time to find exactly the right one for the piece you have in mind. So, to put it simply, I try to assemble the image step by step. I think it's incredibly important to pay attention to the details from the beginning, because only by all the small things coming together do you create something that works as a whole.

YOUR IMAGE *LAST STAND* MERGES MANY DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES AND STYLES. WAS IT A CHALLENGE?

I have to say that every single new project is a huge challenge for me. In my current image called *Last Stand*, I used 3D techniques to form around 25 per cent of the image. I modelled, rendered and then textured the whole armour suit in Photoshop. Then I had to photograph the model for the piece. It was a lot of effort and a huge challenge, but also a rewarding experience.

YOUR WORK HAS A LOT OF DARK HUMOUR IN IT. IS THIS SOMETHING THAT YOU CONSCIOUSLY SET OUT TO DO AND WHAT INFLUENCES THIS?

I think it's good when people see some of my personality or just something that interests them in my pictures – I'd [be] very sad if this was not the case. It's important that my art represents my opinions and view of the world – art is undoubtedly a great way to express my feelings and thoughts through a visual medium.

WHO ARE YOUR DREAM CLIENTS AND COLLABORATORS?

If I were to start a collaboration, it would be important to me that the artist has a completely different style to me. I would like to create something new – something exciting. But I struggle to name a dream collaborator! Nike would definitely be a dream client – but it's really not about the money or prestige that comes when working for a brand such as this. It's more what artists around the world are doing for Nike and how they are experimenting and conjuring up images in a variety of ways.

WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF A COMMISSION FOR YOU?

The hardest part is usually the client. It always it depends how much they trust you. Of course, it's always easier to do personal projects and create images that I like to create, but no one has paid for this yet! ▶



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▶ **WHAT HAS PHOTOSHOP DONE FOR YOU AS AN ARTIST?**

It has given me a way to express myself and to inspire other artists and people. I have often asked myself the question of what I'd have done if Photoshop wasn't in my life, and so far I have no answer.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE TOOLS?

I love my Wacom tablet, I could not be without it – it's an essential part of any Photoshop artist's setup. Otherwise, I love using my digital camera for taking stock images.

WHAT DO YOU THINK SEPARATES YOUR WORK FROM OTHER ARTISTS'?

I think every artist has his own signature – and that's the way it should be. I'm not concerned about being different or standout. I just try to be

myself and that's enough for me.

DO YOU HAVE ANY TIPS OR ADVICE FOR ARTISTS TRYING TO FORGE A CAREER?

First, make sure you invest a lot of time in understanding the basics and more advanced features of Photoshop. Make it like second nature. So you can do anything. And of course, it helps at the beginning to be guided and inspired by your favourite – and famous – artists. Later, you need to start implementing your own ideas and thoughts. Your style will come on its own.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO YOURSELF IF YOU COULD TRAVEL BACK IN TIME TO THE START OF YOUR CAREER?

I would definitely do it all exactly the same. Only everything would be a little more relaxed.

PORTFOLIO TIPS

ALEKSEI KOSTYUK'S PORTFOLIO ADVICE

■ **STYLE**

"The most important thing is that your portfolio should have its own style. It needs an original idea and an original concept to grab the attention of art directors and clients." Kostyuk's online portfolio at www.visio-art.de is a prime example of this, elevating his artwork in a stylish and original way.

■ **RESEARCH**

"I think it really helps to look at the online portfolios of successful designers and illustrators and analyse them," says Kostyuk. Of course, the artist is referring to the design of your site as well as the work you show. Look at how top artists categorise their work – it could be by client, date or something more original like theme or colour.

■ **QUALITY**

Kostyuk is quite clear when it comes to what you should present in your portfolio. "Always show your best work," he emphasises. "The amount of projects in your portfolio isn't the important thing – it's about the quality of work." It only takes one image in a style that a client likes to get you that big job!

iMobile: This image was created for the Fotolia "TEN Collection" Contest. Kostyuk won the 'iMobile' category





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OTHERWORLDLY ILLUSTRATION

FREELANCE CONCEPT ARTIST ALEX LEVIELLE SHARES HIS SECRETS TO CREATING IMAGINATIVE CHARACTERS AND SCENES IN PHOTOSHOP

ABOUT THE ARTIST

ALEX LEVIELLE
www.alexlevielle.me



Alex Levieille was born in Troyes, France, and a love of art and movies throughout the years led him to study Illustration at Ringling College of Art and Design, USA.

Alex is currently a freelance concept artist who specialises in character design, environment design and illustrations.

NAME OF PROJECT HOPE



For Alex Levieille, designing whole new fantasy worlds is just a part of the job. Initially inspired by a love of storytelling through film, he soon became passionate about using illustration to create worlds and characters that his own audiences would want to explore. "I doubted myself back when I was very young, but many of my friends, teachers and family supported me and really saw potential," Levieille reveals. "The feelings and emotions the audience has towards my pieces really excites me, and the demand for more from my fans really pushes me to create more and inspire more."

With Photoshop as a principle tool, Levieille aims to ultimately end up giving other young artists the same type of inspiration he had when he first started out. In five years time, he hopes to work for an animation company as a concept artist – and bringing his designs to life on the big screen is definitely an all-time goal.

WHAT MAKES PHOTOSHOP IMPORTANT TO YOUR WORKFLOW?

Photoshop is a great tool for concept artists, consisting of speed and comfort. Many clients rely on quick ideas to portray for a specific project deadline. For comfort you have the ability to undo and really

explore your idea without worrying about mistakes or even running out of paint. Photoshop is very important for my workflow mainly for its fluid mark making and its easy access to many tools to get the job done the way you want it.

WHAT ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL ELEMENTS TO LEARN TO BECOME A GREAT ILLUSTRATOR?

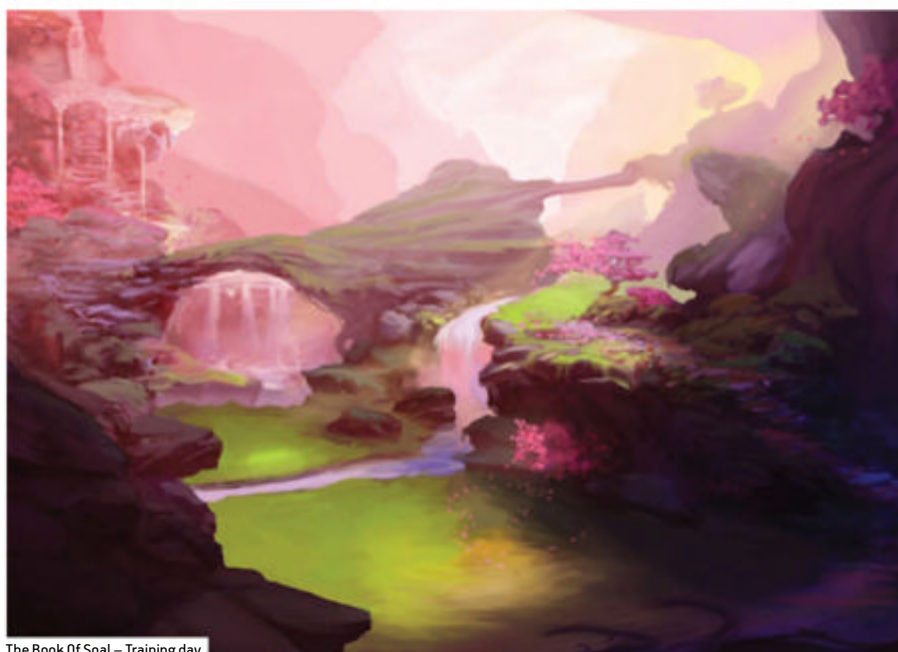
Composition, values and shapes are important, but most of all the emotion and meaning you portray in your work is a very crucial element in any art piece. An art piece that touches an individual's soul through emotion is a great success and will never be forgotten.

HOW DO YOU CREATE ART THAT IS SO THOUGHT PROVOKING AS WELL AS BEING EXTREMELY BEAUTIFUL?

When creating my pieces I enjoy the storytelling aspect of the thought process. I put meaning behind every design I do rather than just designing because it looks cool.

COULD YOU TAKE US THROUGH THE WORKFLOW THAT WENT BEHIND HOPE?

Well first off my inspiration came from how I felt at the time. I was in a tough spot, but I had a great friend who



The Book Of Soal – Training day

All images © Alex Levieille



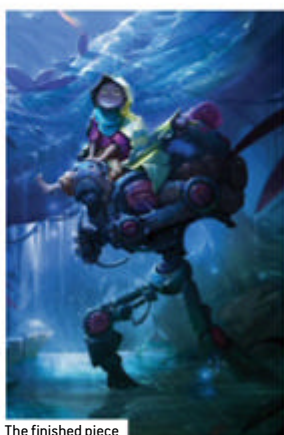
Starting Hope



Creating characters



Detailing



The finished piece

supported me and inspired me to push on... [they] gave me hope. Behind every illustration of mine there is meaning [that is] full of emotion covered in beauty. The workflow behind the creation of *Hope* took one step at a time, layer by layer piling paint on top of paint. I usually experiment with the shapes, composition, values and idea of the piece first. Then the fun begins where I start rendering and adding rain, reflections, colour, and rust.



The Traveler from The Book of Soal

WHAT WERE THE MAIN PHOTOSHOP TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES YOU USED FOR THE CREATION OF THE PIECE?

The main Photoshop tools and techniques used for my piece were three brushes: a round traditional brush, flat round brush for edge control and a custom brush of mine for a painterly look. I also fool around with Brightness/Contrast, Curves, Hue/Saturation and the Gradient tool. As for technique I first sketch out my piece in black and white to get the overall shapes, values, atmospheric perspective and composition before I start getting into detail. Once rendered I throw a Color layer on top of the black-and-white image and experiment with colour, using complementary colours such as warm and cool to really pop the image. Then once that's done I start cleaning it up and add unique features to the piece such as rain, rust and reflections to really add spice to the image. I usually start sketchy and painterly in the beginning and as I progress I get more in depth.

WERE THERE ANY CHALLENGES THAT YOU NEEDED TO OVERCOME TO BE ABLE TO COMPLETE THE PROJECT?

Once in a while I run into artist's block. The way I solve that is to take my eyes off the piece and explore inspiration from movies to art books. Usually the movies and art books will relate to what I'm working on from



Without a proper composition the viewer will have a very difficult time deciding where to look, and we don't want that. Shapes and even direction from a simple brush stroke or even a literal direction like the point of a finger from a character will create a successful composition. For example, my character looking up at the bird gives the viewer a direction to explore the rest of my image.

I occasionally use photo references and textures either as a layout to start a painting or to add texture to a certain area of the piece. Usually I play around with the image as a Multiply layer, Overlay or Soft Light layer depending what the image is and how it impacts this piece.

Always use a Gradient tool at the beginning of the process to lay out where the light will come from. Lighting is very important when setting up [the] type of mood you're trying to execute in your piece, whether it's a dark and sad mood or a happy and joyful mood. From observing the real world I can automatically spot where the light is going to hit and where it won't.

the mood and style of the piece. I also don't know when to stop rendering a piece, I will always find something about the piece that bothers me. I overcame that challenge by rendering what's important, the main focus of the image – that's when composition comes in handy.

WHAT OTHER ILLUSTRATORS DO YOU FIND MOST INSPIRING TO YOUR OWN WORK?

I find Paul Bonner, Andrew Theophilopoulos and Assaf Horowitz very inspirational artists that have always influenced my work from colours to styles.

ARE THERE ANY PHOTOSHOP PLUG-INS, BRUSHES, OR ANY OTHER RESOURCES YOU WOULD RECOMMEND TO A BEGINNER TODAY?

Honestly I recommend just using the traditional round brush to begin with. I began with just using the round brush before I experimented with other brushes. Then after [becoming] an expert using round brushes I highly recommend exploring other brushes and getting a feel [for their] variety and speed. Even before using Photoshop I recommend learning the fundamentals of traditional painting and drawing, because in a way Photoshop works the same way.

WHAT WOULD YOU MOST LOVE TO SEE AS DEVELOPMENTS/NEW TOOLS WITHIN PHOTOSHOP FOR THE FUTURE?

Texture swatches!

ENGINE CREATIVE

PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IS ALL IN A DAY'S WORK FOR THIS CUTTING-EDGE UK STUDIO, WHO ARE ONE OF THE TOP AR PRODUCERS

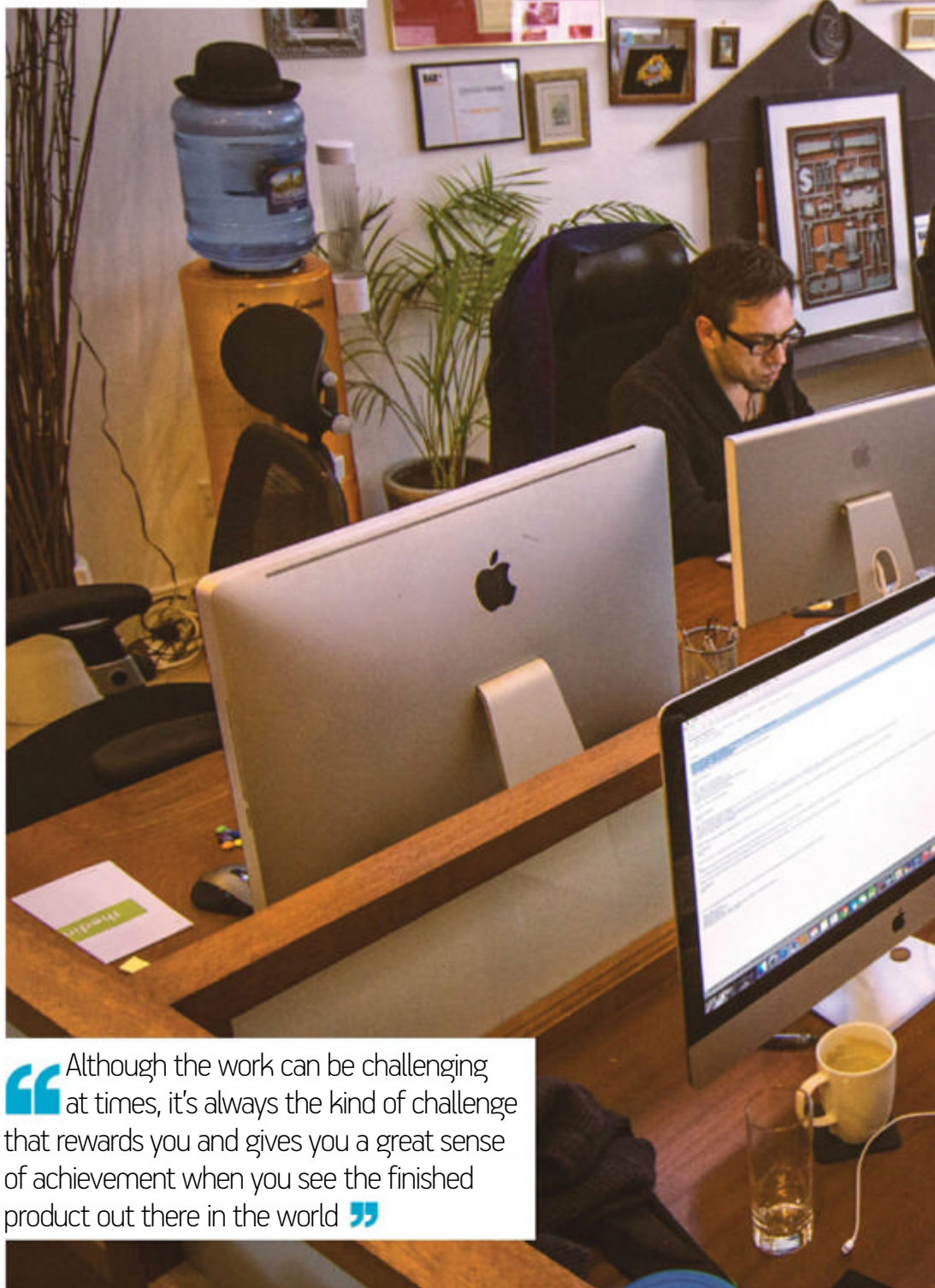
Augmented reality, phone apps, interactive designs and online branding – these are all part of life in our digital world. Engine Creative is a digital agency with a 'can do' attitude that is creating exceptional examples of new media applications. It has won a number of awards, including most recently the RAR award for Creativity and Innovation, as well as a DRUM Marketing award. The studio has also been recognised by Luerzer's Archive as one of the Top 200 Illustrators in the World.

Engine Creative has always been a digital agency, starting out with four people working out of their bedrooms, all the way through to what it has grown into today – an innovative digital design agency operating out of a converted chapel headquarters in Northampton UK.

Co-founder Matt Key, managing director, and Phil Christer, creative director, continue to push the company forward: "The drive to explore and push the boundaries of digital technology just to see what happens, [and] what we can achieve, that's what sets our agency apart from others, and it also forms the basis of our studio ethos – love what you do. We give our designers and developers the opportunity to experiment with new technologies and new ways of working, which is exciting for everyone. Our studio is a creative hub of passionate people who enjoy what they do and who they work with, both colleagues and clients. We are immensely proud of the work our people produce."

Part of the reason behind the success of this studio is in the way that the team pulls together and explores different ideas to find the right solutions: "The most important thing is that everyone has a voice. We get the key people together at the outset of a project to generate ideas and gain an understanding of the boundaries of what can be achieved, and then work out how that meets with the client's needs. Our creativity comes from a broad range of ideas and influences, and letting everyone involved bring their own ingenuity, inspiration and experience to the table gives us the strongest starting point to work from. We make sure that each project is a brand new concept – completely unique."

The environment that they work in certainly helps with creativity, communication and collaboration. Having been recently renovated, the team agree that the studio itself is a dynamic and inspirational place to work. "The open-plan layout allows for the flow of ideas with pop-up meeting areas, brainstorming whiteboard walls and all of the latest tech gadgets



“Although the work can be challenging at times, it's always the kind of challenge that rewards you and gives you a great sense of achievement when you see the finished product out there in the world”



ENGINE™ CREATIVE

ABOUT THE STUDIO

ENGINE CREATIVE
www.enginecreative.co.uk
@EngineCreative

Engine Creative is an award winning, independent creative agency that helps forward thinking brands and organisations engage with their audience. Formed in 1997, evolving year on year and always eager to work with likeminded collaborators.



Matt Key
Managing Director /
Co-Founder



Phil Christer
Creative Director /
Co-Founder



Paula Lane
Production Manager



Paul Chisholm
Senior Creative



Production: Open plan design –
some of the designers and
developers at their desks



for people to test," say Paul Chisholm, senior creative, and Paula Lane, production manager. "It's an environment that encourages a sense of community, and there's a real sense of shared knowledge and collaboration between everybody. There are constant battles for supremacy over the Sonos jukebox player, free meals on a Thursday lunch (occasional cooking required) and more often than not there's a cold beer in the fridge on a Friday afternoon. Although the work can be challenging at times, it's always the kind of challenge that rewards you and gives you a great sense of achievement when you see the finished product out there in the world."

Engine Creative has worked for some top-name clients, creating immersive experiences that engage the audience and encourage them to interact. One recent project was for Coca-Cola, which was a mobile gaming experience called *Let's Goooooal!*. This

was a particular favourite for Chisholm thanks to the magical combination of football and work: "This project was great to work on as it incorporated lots of elements, technical challenges and a surprising amount of creative freedom considering the brands involved. The project was a promotional campaign broadcast to the Tesco Discover AR App and Publishing Platform for which we developed a game, quiz, live World Cup data and social sharing all wrapped up in a slick AR experience. Coca-Cola and Tesco wanted to create an innovative and immersive World Cup experience. Our concept was to challenge Tesco shoppers to create the world's longest Goooooal! celebration by accessing the exclusive *Let's Goooooal!* game. An augmented mobile gaming experience, the *Let's Goooooal!* game is a massively enhanced take on the *Flappy Birds* genre, which includes additional gameplay features. Tesco

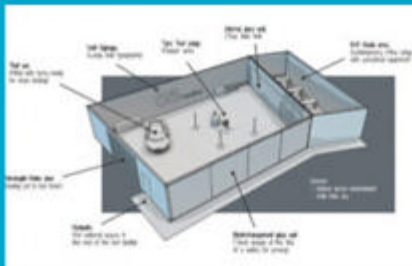
customers have to kick a football through the Os in a never-ending Goooooal! and can share their scores across social channels."

Engine Creative always adapts its work in order to suit the needs of all the clients, but its signature is in the high quality of the output that it is able to deliver every time, explains Phil Christer. "I wouldn't say that we have a specific studio style, but we are recognised for producing extremely high-quality work that pushes the boundaries of technology. We are known for our innovative output, and that is why clients come to us when they want a high-grade piece of work that is going to set them apart from their competitors. When we work with a client we first identify what it is that they want to achieve, and then we help them to develop and cement their brief in line with that target. We endeavour to build an understanding of our clients; we become immersed



■ TOYO TESTING LAB

ASSOCIATE CREATIVE DIRECTOR DAN SMITH TALKS US THROUGH THIS VISUAL ENVIRONMENT FOR AN APP AND 3D PRODUCT ANIMATIONS FOR TOYO TIRES EUROPE



01 | CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

After collecting visual reference and building a mood board, we created a rough build-out of the lab environment space, featuring placements for the main props and features that will be seen in both the animations and the static imagery.



02 | MODELLING AND ENVIRONMENT BUILD

Once the concept was signed off by the client, we then went ahead and created the full 3D environment using Cinema4D. The camera viewpoint would always be from within the lab, so the exterior environment was created in such a way to minimise work and render time.



03 | TEXTURES, MATERIALS AND LIGHTING

Referencing the materials used within the environments and architecture that was collected for the mood boards, we created shaders and replicated textures both within Cinema 4D and Photoshop. The lighting also took its cues from the clean and clinical real-world counterparts we were reproducing for the tyre-testing lab.



04 | WINTER AND SUMMER

Our scene had to cater for a product range that covered both summer and specialist winter tyres. So the external environment was created to be easily switched between seasons, with appropriate realistic textures created in Photoshop.



05 | GRADING

Often, even after a lot of work within Cinema4D to create the perfect look and feel, we'll grade the imagery and add effects in Photoshop, just as we would the final animation in Premiere and Magic Bullet.

▶ in their brand and strategy, which enables us to develop opportune and relevant campaign solutions for them."

This is what sets the studio apart from its peers, alongside the depth of experience that it has in digital technology. In particular, it is one of the few agencies working with high-end Augmented Reality: "Our Augmented Reality (AR) operation puts us in the top handful of companies working in AR in the UK, and we are noted for having achieved a number of firsts – we created the first augmented magazine for Top Gear and the first AR album cover for The Ting Tings. We're recognised as a leader in the AR community, a point underscored by the talks we have conducted on the subject at a variety of international conferences."

Creating these cutting-edge visuals requires an impressive set of the most up-to-date software packages. Of course, Photoshop is included among them and is something that associate creative director Dan Smith says that he couldn't do without: "Photoshop is probably the most fundamental tool in any workflow. It is the thread through nearly all our executions, from initial visualisation to final execution. In the early stages of the production pipeline it is used to flesh out reference images, storyboards and concept art along with painting and colour correction for early style frames. We use Photoshop heavily for separating images and for

“I wouldn't say that we have a specific studio style, but we are recognised for producing extremely high-quality work that pushes the boundaries of technology”



Open plan: A view looking down the main studio

creating assets needed for other applications. We use it for texture painting maps in 3D and compositing still renders. The Photoshop brushes are great for creating quick custom effects too.

For me it's the flexibility of Photoshop to perform small tasks as a complement to another app all the way through to in-depth compositing and retouching work on its own."

Other software includes Illustrator, After Effects, InDesign and Paper. UXPin is used for wireframing, and Maya, Cinema 4D and ZBrush for 3D creations. Maya is also used for the studio team's AR work: "We can easily export different animations in one file, which we can call up in code. Maya is capable of so much, but with AR you get very limited render capabilities. By combining Maya's versatile export tools with Photoshop we are able to fake lots of details to improve the photo-real quality of our AR 3D work."

The studio plans to continue to push forward, evolving with new technologies. It has developed and launched Reality Engine, its unique AR publishing platform, which brings together Metaio's great AR capability with Engine Creative's technical and commercial experience to offer an easy and powerful way to create and publish rich AR experiences. Matt Key and Phil Christer hope to continue in the manner that the studio began, keeping ahead of the curve with the latest tech to produce exceptional projects for their clients: "Our agency was here before the .com bubble burst and we have seen over the years how both consumers and brands are using technology. The shifting technological landscape means that our clients are always looking for new and innovative ways of connecting with their audiences, and as those options increase it is vital for us to stay ahead of the curve in understanding what the best platforms and methods of communication are."

■ A DAY IN THE LIFE OF PAUL CHISHOLM

WE PEEK BEHIND THE SCENES AT ENGINE CREATIVE



09:30 | PROJECT CATCH UP

Having a catch-up meeting with our production manager to see where we are currently and what the day's objectives will be. With project timings and deliverables often changing frequently, it's essential we keep a constant dialogue going between creatives and managers.



11:00 | MEETING

The Skittles ball is Engine Creative's take on the office water cooler, providing a few minutes away from the desk and a much needed sugar hit during the day!



13:30 | CONCEPT COLLABORATION

Going through some concepts for an upcoming pitch with our creative director. Often he will sketch ideas on his iPad and send them through to me so I can start working them up in Photoshop. This is the fun part of the project where there are no bad ideas.



heat extra AR App in situ: Promotional images of the heat extra AR App user screens for Bauer Media

TOP 5 PRODUCTION TIPS

Paul, Matt and Paula share their essential advice

■ FILE FORMULATION

The structure of layers in Photoshop files and the naming of conventions used is key to a collaborative studio and working as a team, as this allows any individual to pick up a piece of work and continue on with it.

■ LIQUID DESK SPACES

The ability to move around the studio easily is crucial to our team and the working environment; a designer and developer can work and collaborate side by side when a project requires it.

■ INNOVATION THREADS

Embrace innovation; allow yourself and your team to be inspired by other's ideas and methods of working. Learn from daily experiences, observations and challenges, they may seem irrelevant at the time, but moving forward they could be the foundations of something great.

■ COLLABORATIVE CLOUD DOCUMENTS

We use various programs such as Google Docs, Pages and Numbers on a shared server via the Cloud functionality, which gives us accurate, up-to-date data at any given time.

■ EMBRACE NEW TECHNOLOGY

We use the Paper app to sketch out ideas that are then transferred directly into Photoshop. It's great for speeding up workflow, and ideas can be sketched anywhere on the iPad and sent directly through to designers to work on.



LCST_Lacoste Retail AR Campaign: Promotional images of the Lacoste LCST Retail AR App campaign



15:00 | AD-HOC MEETING IN THE KITCHEN

We often have quick catch-ups and micro-meetings all around the office. Here we're going through current project deliverables. We use multiple visual aids such as iPads and our glass boards to keep on top of things and to make instant changes and updates.



16:00 | IN THE ZONE

I sit right among our designers and developers so we can easily communicate when we need to, but this doesn't stop us from being able to focus when we need to. With an end of day deadline looming I have my head well and truly in the zone.



18:00 | FRIDAY BEERS!

It would be a dark Friday at Engine if there wasn't a beer in the fridge! Now we've reached the end of the week we can kick back a little, discuss what we've each been working on and look forward to a well-earned break over the weekend.

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PRO PHOTO EFFECTS

EVERYONE KNOWS THE POWER OF PHOTOSHOP NOW, BUT TRUST IN THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE HASN'T BROKEN DOWN. A NEW GENERATION OF PHOTOMANIPULATORS ARE PROVING THAT SEEING IS BELIEVING

Photomanipulation is like an illusionist's trick," says Jarek Kubicki. "Although we are aware that we're witnessing an illusion, it works only as long as we don't see how it is achieved. Similarly, photomanipulation is a success only when you can't see any flaws in the technique. It has to be as perfectly done as possible, so that no technical shortcomings interfere with the work's reception and the viewer can believe our vision, even if it's extremely surreal." While some manipulations are functional, designed to fix either what's wrong with an image, what distracts from the focus or to add information that a client wants to be advertised. That sort of work is subtle and unobtrusive. At the other end of the scale there's photomanipulation as style, compositing together

images and elements for dramatic effect. And then there's photomanipulation as an art, no different from photography except that, suddenly, anything and everything is possible.

Brandon Cawood notes that, "The key to a good photomanipulation is obviously manipulating it to the point where it looks like it could all be one image. The manipulations that impress me are the ones that leave me puzzled on how the creator pulled it off."

But if great work is hard to achieve, poor work is a dime a dozen. "The main problem is realism," says Erik Johansson, discussing the common mistakes he sees. "I don't say my work is perfect but I think that it's very important to take a step back and try to ask yourself 'what would this look like if it would have been photographed?'" For Martin De Pasquale, "The idea makes it stand... I see many jobs that have

many technical errors, that the ideas are very forced, and do not occur naturally. Light is very, very important in photography and manipulation, and is what manages to convey a feeling. When shadows and lights do not match, the tones and colours are not homogeneous, the crop-frame is not the best, it is when the scene is not real, and breaks the illusion."

Dave Cox says simply, that in this industry, "Detail is paramount. It's the first thing I look for in an artist's work. Head straight for the most detailed parts and look to see how everything works together. Obvious mistakes are easy to spot, unfinished asset masks with hard edges, poorly done shadows, and incorrect lighting all jump out to the trained eye as entry-level mistakes." ▶

■ CONTRIBUTORS

JAREK KUBICKI WWW.KUBICKI.INFO

Jarek Kubicki is an artist, photographer and the creative director at a Warsaw advertising agency. He's won many awards for his web design.

BRANDON CAWOOD WWW.BRANDONCAWOOD.40RMAT.COM

Brandon Cawood is a photographer known for detail-oriented and creative images and cinematic portraiture. His retouching and photomanipulation skills have been put to work both in Georgia and for clients across the world.

ZACH BUSH WWW.ZACHBUSH.COM

Freelance illustrator Zach Bush works in ZBrush and Cinema 4D as well as Photoshop, and likes to shoot his own photos to create his incredible images from.

ERIK JOHANSSON WWW.ERIKJOHANSSONPHOTO.COM

Erik Johansson is a photographer and retoucher from Sweden, who is now based in Berlin. He shoots with a Hasselblad H5D-40 and his work aims to make the fantastical look realistic.

RENATO NASCIMENTO WWW.ILUMINATA.COM.BR

Co-founder of Rio de Janeiro's Iluminata Produtora de Imagem, a creative agency that specialises in combining the photographic with 3D, Renato Nascimento originally trained in Graphic Design and has many years' experience in advertising.

MARTIN DE PASQUALE WWW.BEHANCE.NET/MARTINDEPASQUALE

Martin De Pasquale is an Argentinean designer, art director and artist, who specialises in photomanipulations, advertising manipulations, (self) portraits, concept art.

FRED MURAM WWW.PARADIGMCOLORSTUDIO.COM

Paradigm Color Studio is a pre-media and production company, based in Chicago. Owner and managing director Fred Muram has ensured company has had a range of high-profile clients since it started life in 2009.

DAVE COX WWW.ELEVENDY.COM

Dave Cox is the CEO and executive creative director of Elevendy, a creative support studio that specialises in photo compositing, retouching and 3D.

© Dave Cox



▶ SELECTING AND TRANSFORMING

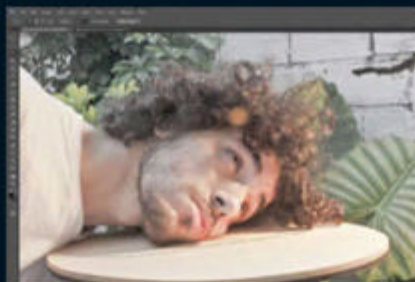
Knowing what mistakes beginners usually make is the first step to being able to avoid them. Cox offers a comprehensive list of the problems he often spots: "Amateur work will often have unfinished masks on composited assets where the artist has brushed around the item being composited but not all the way to the boundary of the dropped in piece... [There will be] shadow issues where feet or other elements that have been cut out are supposed to be sitting on a comped-in surface. These give the piece a disjointed look and composited elements will look awkward or not married to the background... Lighting problems when key light sources are not pre-planned and shadows don't match the reality of physics." He also comes across people "excusing odd looking things in a manipulation because 'that's actually in the shot' when, regardless of the reality of the situation, it looks off and needs to be fixed... [And] the over-use of

effects and tricks, too much high pass, too much grain, heavy-handed retouching techniques."

Improving your technical Photoshop skills is a must, but don't just rush in and use complicated techniques because you think it'll make you look like a professional. You should spend time learning and improving your skills. The most important step is the first one, and that's planning. "I definitely have to shoot with specific ideas in mind," Zach Bush says, "I want the photos to work for my concept, not try to force a concept around my photos." Juggling multiple images from multiple sources is incredibly demanding work, and for Cox, the key to doing it in a believable way is, "planning and pre-visualisation. You have to consider the expected flow of the piece you're creating. Plan for lighting in your asset shoots, or know the limitations of your reality if you're using stock images and plan the composite to account for them."

SELECTING IMAGE ELEMENTS

MARTIN DE PASQUALE IS A LONG-TIME WACOM USER. HE EXPLAINS HOW THE LASSO TOOL WORKS FOR HIM



01 OFF WITH HIS HEAD

De Pasquale often uses his own image in his work. In this example he has a head, and a new background to put it on. "I need to place it," he explains, "and for that, the Lasso tool is the best option. It doesn't have to be perfect, just cut, and move."



02 TIDY UP THE SELECTION

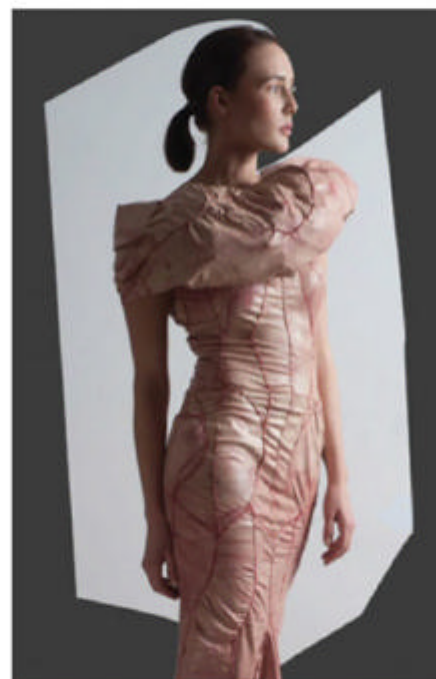
De Pasquale continues that the Lasso is the most practical tool "when working with a Wacom. It helps me because it lets me work freely in the selections, and be precise at the same time. When I locate it, I use Photoshop brushes to erase and redraw hair." Often he has to redraw the hair because it's the easiest way to complete it.



03 SELECT THE SHADOWS

To make the shadows realistic, De Pasquale explains, "[I] reused the original shade. To do this, I cut the shadows, burn whites with Levels, remove saturation, and put the layer on Multiply. With that, and redrawing when necessary to get perfect shadows, [I] achieve the effect."

© Martin DePasquale



© Renato Nascimento

SELECTION TOOLS

A MYRIAD OF TOOLS, A MULTITUDE OF TECHNIQUES. THE EXPERTS REVEAL HOW THEY MAKE SELECTIONS

When it comes to selection, Renato Nascimento likes to keep it simple with the Lasso and the Pen tool. But he explains that, if you were to cut the Eiffel Tower out with all of its detailed structure using only the Pen tool, it would be a huge waste of time. In that instance there are much better tools like Color Range or even selecting by colour channels. He says, "Alongside Photoshop's default shortcuts I like to create my own, to really optimise my workflow."

For Jarek Kubicki, the strategy of choice is to "rely on the combination of a vector mask, created with a Pen tool, and a regular Magic Wand." He explains: "So, I work on two masks – a vector mask and a bitmap mask. The vector one allows me to remove large spaces and, for example, create a soft, precise arc. Since vectors can be freely edited, you can tweak and change the form of a given path until you reach your masking goal. In the final stage I retouch the masking with a brush on the bitmap mask."

"I definitely have to shoot with specific ideas in mind. I want the photos to work for my concept, not try to force a concept around my photos"

Zach Bush, www.zachbush.com

© Jarek Kubicki



60623: Jarek Kubicki is unimpressed when he sees "a lack of thoroughness when connecting various elements. The fact that you're blending paint splashes does not mean you can skip working on precise, pixel-by-pixel transitions between elements"

© Martin DePasquale



USE THE WARP TOOL

THE WARP TOOL IS POWERFUL, BUT DON'T OVERDO IT, SAYS MARTIN DE PASQUALE

Martin De Pasquale often uses Warp to correct perspective. He explains that photographs often have a fish eye effect that needs correcting. He says, "To do this, I select all photography and use Transform. When nodes to Transform appear, I choose the Warp option for a grid that you can use to distort. To distort parts in a controlled way [and not excessively]... When the vanishing points and perspectives don't match one hundred per cent that is when I use it. So I can equalise pictures, and the point of view. With the dog, I needed it to look more awesome and bigger so I just enlarge the bottom of the picture, in a kind of pyramid, for that feeling of enormity."



Don't overdo it: "I try to not over-use the transformation tools on parts of the composite," says Fred Muram of the Paradigm Color Studio, "but learning how to gently transform parts is important"

Look elsewhere: "When a composite piece is not working," Muram explains, then "I start looking for another method to get the comp to look right. The new Perspective Transform tools in Creative Cloud are fantastic, and are great if you need to replace entire walls or ceilings"

You're beautiful: "I enjoy making things beautiful," says Muram, "but whether we are making something beautiful or believable depends on the image, the photographers we work with, or the art director from an agency. I think we are lucky to have a good balance of both"

Other avenues: Being careful with Transform, Muram says "QuickMMask is probably the tool I use most. I might start by quickly roughing in a selection with the pen tool and bring the selection into Quick Mask to blend my mask softness to better fit my plate"

© Fred Muram

Of course, that doesn't mean you can't sometimes just noodle around with an idea. Kubicki likes to give himself some flexibility. "Usually I take photos without any specific idea in mind," he says, "But I do go for a certain mood. Sometimes an idea that led me to a photo session turns out to be useless in the editing stage and I use the photos in a different way than I planned. Or I don't use them at all. From every session I come back with a few hundred photos divided into series according to lighting, outfit and poses, or facial expressions. An idea comes later, sometimes even several years later."

When that idea does come, a great Photoshop artist has to Cut, Transform and polish the image. "I usually cut out the layers quite roughly first with either the Magnetic Lasso or Pen tool," says Johansson, "I then fine tune the mask in detail with the Smudge tool set on one to five pixel radius by pushing the mask in or out. The Smudge tool is by far my favourite tool for masking. When it comes to newer features in Photoshop I think the Puppet Warp and Perspective Warp are pretty great."

Keeping it simple is something a lot of the professionals suggest. Find a method that works for you and hone it over the years, rather than looking for shortcuts. "I do not use any strange tools," says Martin De Pasquale, "I only use a Wacom tablet, and cut. I can't find a tool that allows me to crop with accuracy in Photoshop. Sometimes, using the Magic Wand tool, but only when they are full colours. Other times, I try to use Channels, or Color Range, to choose a particular colour. But the hardest thing is always hair. When you are on a full colour it is easy...[often end up] redrawing the hair that I need."

These initial stages of the process are so important, that Cox has instituted a company protocol at Eleventy. He explains: "All of our retouchers and digital artists are taught to cut out objects using the vector tools in Photoshop, we've found other methods to be cumbersome, time consuming, and lacking in quality of the cut out. Second to that we always practice non-destructive editing so that at any point we can go as far back as we need to when a client shifts direction, as they sometimes do."

COMPOSITING

Assuming then that you've planned your piece, carefully cut out your elements, how do you go about putting them together?

De Pasquale has a straightforward approach, believing that "the tools can be learnt without problems. The important thing is how to solve each problem, and knowing what tool to use. The best thing you can do is find many artists who do similar things, to understand how to resolve different situations." So, for Bush, the number one thing when it comes to compositing is that "the photos you're using don't have harsh lighting or dark shadows; use more neutral lighting." He advises that you really "take your time removing the backgrounds from images. Use Curves and Levels correctly. Become skilled in digital painting in order to smoothly blend one photo to another." But that's the point, the tools can be learnt and must be. So practise and practise some more, and don't expect your first attempts to

blend as smoothly as the ones on these pages. You'll find your own style and your own strategies in time, and you'll be all the better for it.

"In addition to consistent lighting, sharpness, contrast, noise, and resolution," says Muram, "I tend to retouch over the edges of masks once we have finalised layout and colour. This allows me to blend all of the separate parts of my composite into a final layer that feels like one image."

For Johansson, it's really all about control. You can't make a silk purse from a sow's ear after all, and you can't composite perfectly if the pieces you're working with aren't good enough. Perspective and light are key, because "Most other things can be changed, such as colour, contrast and brightness. I realised early in order to make my work look realistic I need to shoot all the parts myself, I think using stock photography is often a compromise with either perspective or light. I think it's also



Set Them Free: Even in the most fantastic image, Erik Johansson tries to follow "the rules and limitations of the camera"

© Erik Johansson



© Zach Bush

CLIPPING MASKS

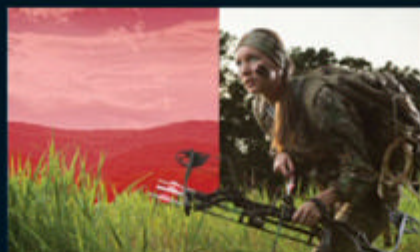
WORKING SIMPLY WITH THE CONTENTS AND TRANSPARENCY OF YOUR LAYERS, CLIPPING MASKS ARE A GREAT WAY TO COMBINE IMAGES

For this striking illustration, Zach Bush's wife kindly posed for him, and once he wanted to create highlights, he needed the help of a Clipping Mask. He says: "When I want to place in some highlights on the body I create a new Curves layer and invert the layer mask to hide the effect and turn it into a Clipping Mask. Then I will begin to paint in the highlights using the tablet."

But, as Renato Nascimento notes, "Each professional has his or her own way to create... Layer Masks and Clipping Masks are useful, but I don't see them as essentials." He uses them when he knows he has to work non-destructively because he might have to go back, but "keeping a lot of layers with its masks can make a lot bigger and heavier file."

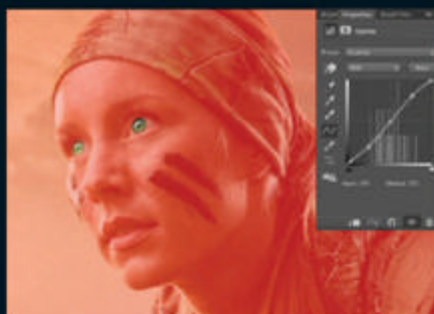
LAYER MASKING

THE KEY TO GREAT LAYER MASKS IS TO PRACTICE THE DIFFERENT REASONS FOR USING THEM, AS BRANDON CAWOOD EXPLAINS



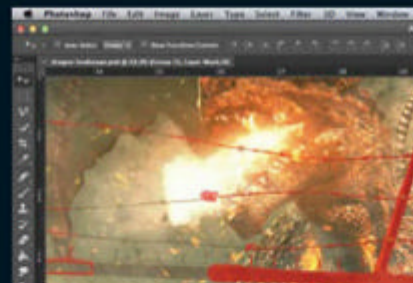
01 | ALL ABOUT THE GIRL

Background replacement is one of the key tasks that is often needed in both retouching work and in creative photomanipulation. Here, Cawood can change where this young woman is with a Layer Mask.



02 | ADJUST THE EYES

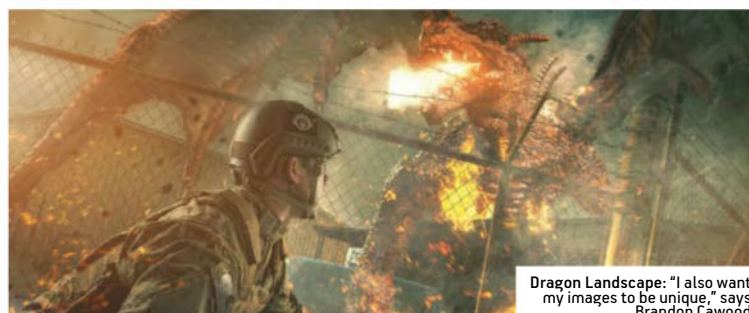
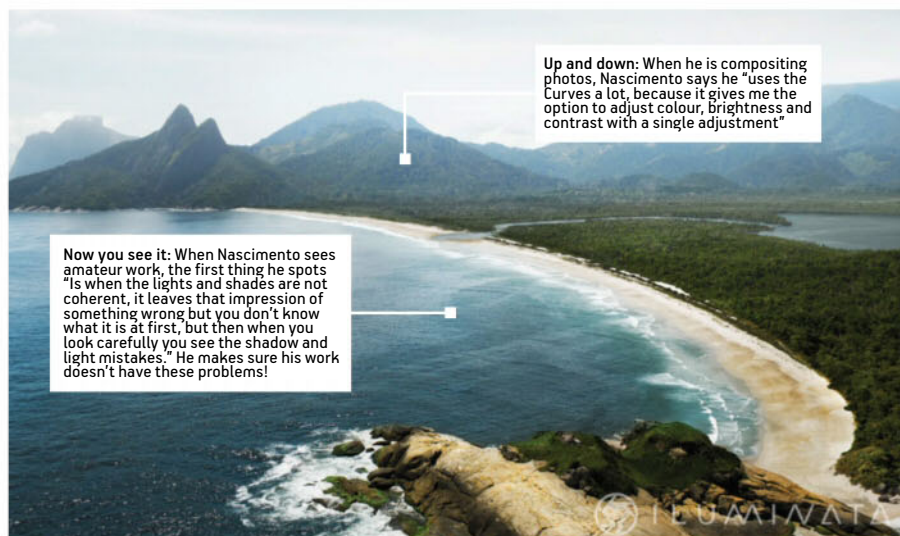
Next, if he wants to add intensity to the piece then he can adjust her eyes. This is using a Layer Mask to affect only one part of the image.



03 | ON THE FENCE

Lastly, if you need to create depth in a image, then placing an object behind something in your image is a good way to do it. And again, creating a Layer Mask is the answer.

© Brandon Cawood



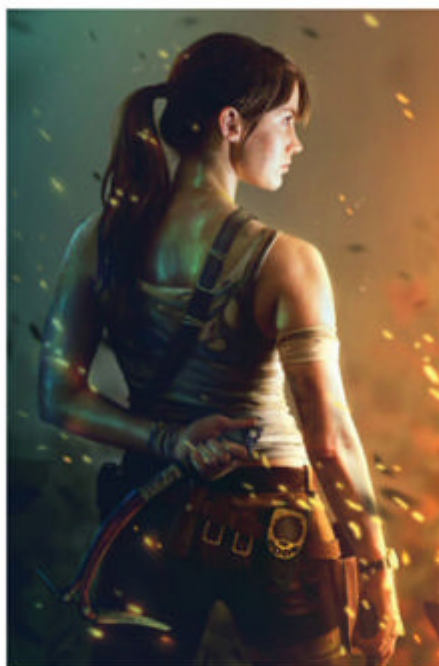
“I tend to retouch the over the edges of masks once we have finalised layout and colour. This allows me to blend all of the separate parts of my composite into a final layer that feels like one image”

Fred Muram, www.paradigmcolorstudio.com

important to let it take time, leave it for a while and try to look at it with new eyes. Flipping the image horizontally also helps looking at it with new eyes, but if you do it too much you get used to seeing it both ways.”

For Cawood, there just aren't any shortcuts. "I have found that often using shortcuts can lead to lower quality work," he says, "I still do most of my masking manually. I think it's important to take your time. Though I don't use shortcuts, I do have a solid workflow. I've spent many hours developing what I need to do as I work through an image. This has allowed me to speed up my process by knowing what I need to do next." He adds that spotting mistakes in other people's work should inspire you to do better: "The biggest turn off for me is an image that looks like it was thrown together. When people don't take the time to make sure they 'cross all their t's and dot their i's' it can really hurt the image. Bad masking and bad colouring are two things that bother me the most. Take your time and double check your work. Make sure you don't leave anything out or skip any steps. Once it's printed you can't change it."



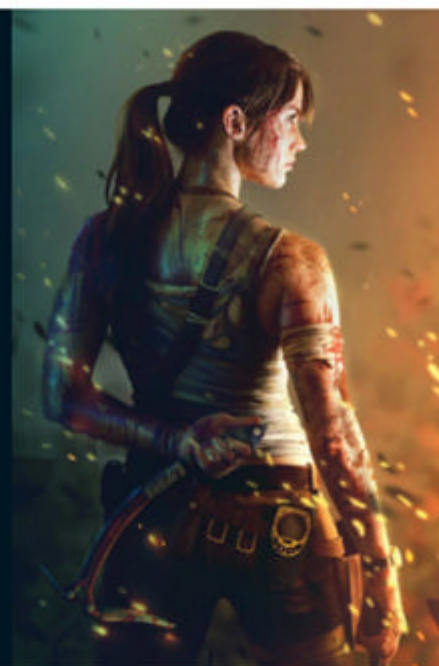


USING TEXTURES

ROUGH UP YOUR WORK AND MAKE IT FEEL REAL

After Zach Bush created the foreground and background and had added weapons to this image of his wife, he says, "[I] needed to dirty her skin up so it looked like she just been through battle. I used red paint splatter textures for her blood and set the layer effect to Overlay and then for the first I used the same red paint splatters and changed the colour of them with Curves and changed the layer effect to Multiply."

Creating his own texture photos is something he's keen on, for which he tries to look at everything around him in different ways. Once he had to create a zombie's arm. As he says, "Who knows what their insides look like? There's not a ton of flesh wound photos out there, and I can't take my own photos of that, but I do have a banana and I can twist that banana, shred it, dye it, mash it, make it into whatever I want."



© Zach Bush

► LIGHTING, TEXTURE AND REALISM

All the experts seem to agree that if there's one single factor that makes a good manipulation, it's lighting. As Bush says, "The lighting makes or breaks my pieces and that's why I focus a lot on dramatic and authentic lighting."

"I always try to make the light have a purpose," explains Johansson. "I often shoot in natural light and if I use strobes I normally try to make them look like natural light. We just have one sun, one key light, for my work. I prefer to keep the light simple and focus more on what is happening in the scene. When shooting in sunlight it's especially important to be

consistent with the direction (height and angle) of the light." And that's why artists who shoot their own material have the advantage from the off. Nascimento says that "Usually light is defined before the start. When we are in the concept stage we already have light direction and colour temperature in mind." When he has to work with stock images, he often finds it easier to "illustrate the lights and shadows to make it look more integrated. For all of the cases, is essential to have references to follow."

Of course, texture is also important. The real world is dirty and gritty and imperfect, and images need to be

too – if they're really striving for believability at least. For Kubicki, it's also "crucial to know the effects that you achieve with traditional art techniques, like oil painting, acrylic painting or ink in reality... It's important that you pay close attention to textures and don't leave any marks that could expose the manipulation... When you combine objects, remember they have to become one in the end: think of the light direction, granularity, image noise, contrast, saturation."

Every manipulation isn't equal, and every manipulator has a different goal in mind anyway. For Johansson, "realism always comes first. I



Alien: Drama is important to Cawood's imagery, and so is making the fantastical feel real

© Brandon Cawood

"I prefer to keep the light simple and focus more on what is happening in the scene. When shooting in sunlight it's especially important to be consistent with the direction (height and angle) of the light"

Erik Johansson, <http://erikjohanssonphoto.com>



Outside In: Erik Johansson always tries to ensure that the light in his images has a purpose

© Erik Johansson



Correct lighting example: Here, Brandon Cawood "used a cross lighting technique. This makes the image much more dynamic and introduces contrasting highlights and shadows. Having the back light also gives a nice edge light that helps separate the subject from the background"



Incorrect lighting example: The original image is flat and under exposed. For Cawood, the key to a great manipulation is "making sure your lighting, perspective, and focal lengths are all cohesive and work together. It is also very important to make sure that all your shadows and highlights make sense"

© Brandon Cawood

PHOTOSHOP'S LIGHTING FILTER

BAD LIGHTING SPOILS EVEN THE BEST COMPOSITION, BUT THE LIGHTING EFFECTS FILTER IS THERE TO HELP YOU OUT

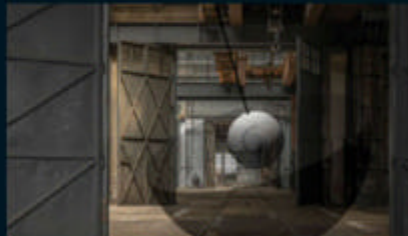


01 | CREATE A BASIC VIGNETTE

The mistake that inexperienced manipulators most often make, according to Paradigm's Fred Muram, is "When I see lighting in a composite that is being reflected from varied directions. If there is a good sense of key light coming from one direction and there is something that is lit from another direction my eye seems to go right to the composited part." To ensure this isn't the case, you might have to create a basic vignette using a spotlight as a source.



© Fred Muram



02 | USE THE INFINITE LIGHT

The second thing you might do with the Lighting Effects filter is to globally re-light an area using the Infinite Light. "Our studio is pretty lucky with regards to lighting challenges," says Muram. "We work with some great photographers who have learned to shoot images specifically for compositing, so they are constantly thinking about keeping the light consistent."

03 | ADD A LIGHTING FILTER

Muram adds: "We also work with quite a bit of stock images, this is where things get a bit more complicated, and relighting with value and colour corrections." The Lighting filter can also be used to add multiple lights to a scene "To create the look of light rays flowing in a set direction using spotlights."

think it's much easier to get a connection to the scene if it looks like a photograph no matter how surreal the subject might be. Something can still be both beautiful and realistic, it usually just requires a bit more work." But for Cox, "beautiful trumps reality every time for me. If that means that the way an arm looks needs to be tweaked, even though that's how it was in real life, we tweak it. Believability is important but beauty and seamlessness come first."

Kubicki wants to interest the viewer above all else: "I want to catch their attention and engage their emotions. 'Beautiful' is not a quality I cherish in art because I simply find it boring. 'Believable' says more about the craftsmanship and, in case of photomanipulations like mine, it's fundamental. But if I were to choose one quality that I strive for in my work, it would be 'intrigue'. My goal is to create works that are attractive both in terms of craftsmanship and topic. I'd rather make something unsettling than beautiful."

Of course, practically speaking, more often than not it depends entirely on what the client wants. Cawood explains, "Making the unbelievable believable is what they are looking for. For others it's all about having something visually pleasing. I always try to fit my client's needs if it is a commissioned piece. When I create personal work I tend to push the boundaries a little more. My favourite work is when I'm given creative freedom for client work! It's like the best of both worlds."



© Martin DePasquale

Nightfall: "Manipulations are a great way to tell something," says Martin De Pasquale, "because it mimics reality, and is always shocking"

▶ ADVANCED PHOTOMANIPULATION TECHNIQUES

Of course, if you can't shoot what you need and you can't find a stock photo of it either, there is a third option: you can model it yourself. And seamlessly blending 3D renders into photographic material is becoming more and more common. It increases your possibilities no end (even if you could light it perfectly, you can't shoot a dinosaur or a spaceship) but it also makes it even more important that you have perfect control over your imagery once it's out of your 3D package and into Photoshop.

"I love blend modes," says Cawood. "I use Screen and Multiply all the time. I will shoot something on black and then use Screen and it keeps me from having to mask it out. This usually works with elements like sparks, flames, dirt, smoke, etc. If I'm working with something dark, I'll do the opposite and shoot it on white and use the Multiply blend mode."

But don't complicate matters if you don't need to. Nascimento admits that he "rarely uses Layer Styles. The shadows and shininess that the tool offers are limited, but in some circumstances I end up using them because there are interesting features like patterns. Blend modes are constantly used, when you learn how it works, it makes your job a lot easier. A good example of blend mode use is when you want to make hair matte or [create] drop shadows."

© Martin De Pasquale



Abstract Summer: In general, Martin De Pasquale's clients come to him for "fantastic/realistic images." He says: "My working process is always the same, sketches, references, see ideas, concepts, and work on it"

“Another frequent mistake is cramming too many elements into one picture, often rather chaotically, as if to draw attention away from the fact that the work lacks creativity”

Jarek Kubicki, www.kubicki.info



© Fred Muram

COMBINE PHOTOS AND ARTWORK ELEMENTS

PUTTING PHOTOS AND CGI TOGETHER CAN BE TRICKY, BUT AT LEAST IT GIVES YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD EXACTLY WHAT YOU NEED

When it comes to bringing different types of elements together, pre-planning is key. "The trick for us," says Paradigm's Fred Muram, "is to be very careful during the image selection process and make quick comps before getting too far along in the process. If we can't find or shoot an image we need for a composite we also have the ability to render parts for a composite in our CGI software."

He adds that they are "getting more requests for integrating CGI with photography. We love MODO 801 and have been working with it since 401. When we have projects where photography is not an option we are able to quickly model, texture, light, and render parts for a composite, and another great thing is we are able to render out perfect masks for whatever we need as well."



Rough and ready: The team at Eleveny began this image with foundational pre-vis "using rough 3D background for layout and humanoids for placement and posing", explains Dave Cox



In the shadows: Once the raw lighting was in place, they began to develop the shadows, painting in additional ones to draw focus. Then texture was added, using "assets gathered from our shoots of discoloured and rusted metal, broken glass and so on," says Cox



Up front: The main characters then had to be placed and married into the background with lighting. Adding the villain into the background came next

Bonus chest hair: Lastly, the whole piece underwent a full retouch, with atmospheric light and shadow paid special attention to. Plus, as Cox puts it, "bonus chest hair"

© Dave Cox

USE BLEND MODES

RENATO NASCIMENTO EXPLAINS HOW THIS IMAGE FOR THE REAÇÃO INSTITUTE WAS BROUGHT TO LIFE

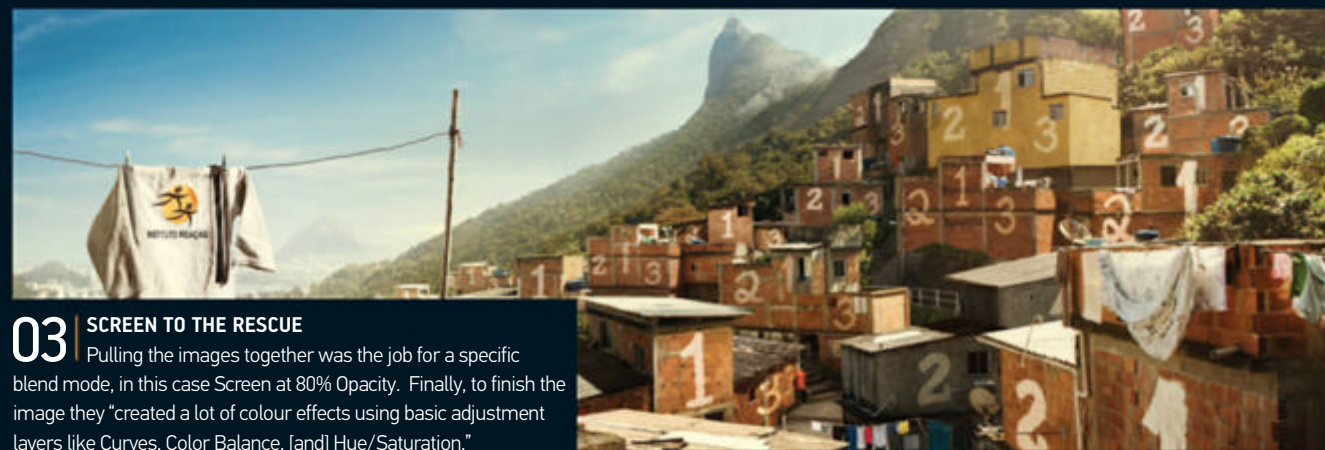


01 | READY, STEADY, GO

With a concept created by Agency FCB Brasil, this image was commissioned by Reação Institute, to celebrate the athlete Rafaela Silva winning the world championship in 2013. Firstly, photographer Flavio Hargreaves went to Dona Marta favela and took several photos for the montage.

02 | IN NUMERICAL ORDER

The challenge was "to simulate podiums using the typical favela houses," explains Nascimento, so, the team also photographed a panel painted with the numbers one, two and three. The photos were then comped together into the best arrangement.



03 | SCREEN TO THE RESCUE

Pulling the images together was the job for a specific blend mode, in this case Screen at 80% Opacity. Finally, to finish the image they "created a lot of colour effects using basic adjustment layers like Curves, Color Balance, [and] Hue/Saturation."

© Renato Nascimento



© Zach Bush

Mad Hatter: "I also build a lot of things in 3D programs, such as Cinema 4d and Zbrush," says Zach Bush, "and then take them into Photoshop for post production"

One of the best things about the incredible standard of photomanipulation that there is out there, is that you can be inspired by it, and use it to push the boundaries of what you do. Cawood says he absolutely loves "looking at other people's work. I'm a big fan of someone taking an old idea and making it new. One big trend that I have noticed in composite work is taking a basic portrait and replacing the background with a dynamic scene of some sort. While these types of composites have their place they all start to look the same. I think Joel Grimes was instrumental in starting this trend. Don't get me wrong, I love Joel's work, but



Drifting Away: Realism is important to Erik Johansson, so the viewer can connect with the scene

© Erik Johansson

his look has been copied so much that, at least for me, it has become somewhat stale."

Kubicki says, "[I] follow trends in photomanipulation closely... [But my] main sources of inspiration are painting and non-digital graphics... Recently I have also started to rely more on traditional techniques: I print the photomanipulation in its initial stages on canvas and I finish it with paint, on the easel. This gives me the opportunity to put even more emotions in the work. [However] there are loads of kitchy, flashy, pink and purple works, as well as countless failed attempts at horror and gore. They have no original qualities, common topic, common style, and often are based on some popular stock photo that has been redone a hundred times. Another frequent mistake is cramming too many elements into one picture, often rather chaotically, as if to draw attention away from the fact that the work lacks creativity."

Because after all, this next-generation of photo manipulators isn't defined by the fact that the artists are using Photoshop's tools better; it's that they're using them to create work that is better, bolder and more creative than ever before. These are true artists with true visions and they've been freed up by knowing Photoshop inside-out to produce more and more creative work.



CREATE A DYNAMIC PHOTOMANIPULATION

LEARN TO CONTROL FIRE AND RAIN USING DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES TO CREATE DYNAMIC ARTWORK

Erode presents the beauty of things being brought down by two elements – rain and fire. This tutorial will cover the areas of creating these elements using different blend modes, and we will also learn how to paint hair and to use adjustment layers to colour the scene.

We will be using Photoshop to create a dynamic, breathing atmosphere along with creating realistic interactions between each element in the scene. Photoshop CS6 and above will be sufficient to follow the tutorial. Additionally we will be visiting how to create my latest style, the reflection plates.

A tablet is recommended since there will be some painting sessions. However a mouse is still sufficient, it will take longer though. We will be importing different images so certain stock photography is required, you should be able to find free photographs online that you can use to follow the tutorial.

If you run into trouble while following the tutorial, reflect on how materials work in reality and how they interact with each other. Such as, when water hits fire, it creates steam. After finishing the tutorial, you will be in control of two elements and able use them in your future projects.



OUR EXPERT

MIKE POE SOE
www.be.net/moepike
@moepike

Mike Pike Soe is a 22-year-old self-taught digital artist and designer from Yangon, Myanmar. He is currently working as a freelance graphic designer while extending his knowledge at Parsons the New School of Design in New York City.

SOURCE FILES

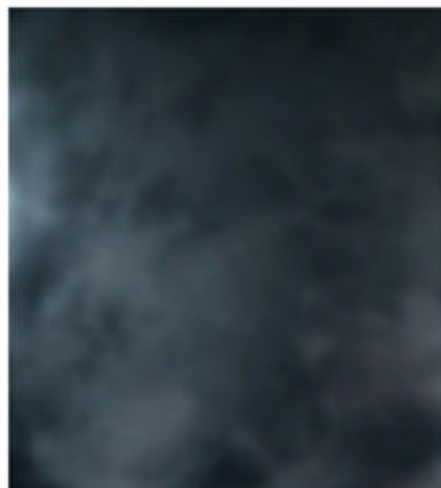
On FileSilo you will find the background image, texture image and the flattened final image

SET UP THE BASE

COMPOSE THE BACKGROUND AND MAKE BASIC ADJUSTMENTS TO THE MODEL PHOTO

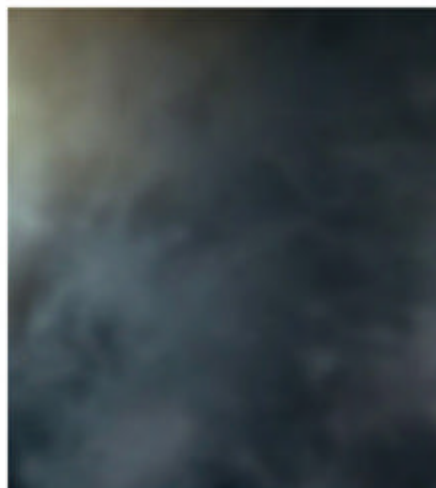
01 SET UP THE BACKGROUND

The goal is to create a dark and humid atmosphere. Create a new document with the dimensions of 2000 pixels by 2444 pixels. Either import the background image or fill a new layer with the colour #0f181b and paint it using different smoke and cloud brushes. The brush colours should range from white to colour #a5c2d2 at 70% Opacity.



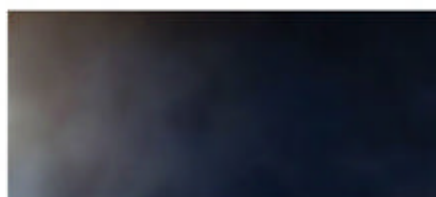
02 FILL IN LIGHT

There are three light sources affecting the objects. Create a new layer above the background image. Paint on top left corner with the colour #543716, set the blend mode to Linear Dodge and name it Warm Light. Create another layer below Warm Light and paint around the edges of the top of the canvas. Name it 'Fill Light'.



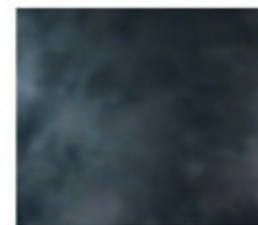
03 FINALISE THE BACKGROUND

Create a new adjustment layer for Selective Colors below the Warm Light layer. Under the Blue tab, change the value of Yellow to -44% then, under the Neutral tab, change the value of Yellow to -5% and Black to +13%. Now under the Black tab, change the value of Yellow to -3% and Black to +9%.



WORK IN PROGRESS

FROM SETTING UP BACKGROUNDS TO FINAL COMPOSITE



Progress 1: Setting up the background



Progress 2: Starting the fire and rain



Progress 3: Reflecting shards



04 | SET UP THE MODEL

Import the model image. Cut out the model using the Pen tool (P) and smooth out the selection using Refine Edge. Make a layer mask and if there are rough edges, paint over the layer mask using a small hard brush. The hard edges of the hair will be painted later in the steps so do not worry about the hair being unrealistic at the moment. Place the model in the middle of the canvas and Cmd/Ctrl+T>Right-click>Flip Horizontal.



05 | CHANGE THE SKIN TONE

The model's skin is pale at the moment. Add colours to the skin by creating a new adjustment layer for Selective Color. Under the Red tab, set the Yellow to +78%, under the Yellow tab, set the Yellow to +8% and Black to -3%. Then under the White tab, set the Yellow to -6% and Black to -1%, under the Neutral tab, set the Yellow to +6% and under the Black tab, set the Yellow to +5% and Black to +3%. Make sure the adjustment layer is clipping-masked to the model layer.



06 | ADD COLOURS TO THE HAIR

Create a new layer, clipping-mask it to the model layer and name it 'Hair Shadow'. Grab the brush tool (B), select a 200px soft brush and paint around the bottom part of the hair. Change the blend mode to Soft Light. Create a new layer above the shadow layer and name it 'Red'. Clipping-mask it to the model layer, set the blend mode to Overlay and Opacity to 70%. Now paint over the rest of the hair with red #ff1700. Group all the model layers and name the group 'Model'.



07 | TOUCH UP THE MODEL

Duplicate the Model group and merge it. Name it 'High Pass'. Now, go to Filter>Other>High Pass and set the value to 6. Change the blend mode to Overlay and clipping-mask it to the Model group. Create a new adjustment layer for Selective Color and also clipping-mask it to the Model group. Under the Red tab, set the Yellow to +6% and Black to +10%. Under the Yellow tab, set the Black to -7%. Under the White tab, set the Black to -8%. Finally under the Black tab, set the Yellow to -7%.

■ QUICK TIP

When painting the hair, make sure not to create a blob. Remember to use small brushes around 2 to 4px. To create more highlights, grab a soft brush, change the blend mode and paint over the highlighted parts of the hair with a bright warm colour.



08 | PAINT THE HAIR

Select the Brush tool (B) at the size of 4px and Opacity of 60%. Create a new layer and name it Hair. To paint realistic hair, there are a couple of things to watch out for. Pay attention to the movement of the hair and how the hairs are reacting to the light. There are three colours to paint in the hair. Start by painting the bottom layer with the colour #661611. Use #873c18 for the middle layer, and the final colour for highlights is #e6b630.

FIRE AND RAIN

PAINT IN SPECIAL EFFECTS WITH PHOTOS AND BRUSHES

09 | START THE FIRE

There are a few steps for creating realistic fire, which include the flames, the affected area, the sparks and the smoke. Fire images can be found on many stock sites. Find one with a black background. Change the blend mode to Linear Dodge and select the layer then Right Click>Warp and make the flames fit the contour of the model's back.



001 | THE AFFECTED AREA
Import texture.jpg and create a layer mask then invert, Cmd/Ctrl+I, and brush over the parts of the model's back

002 | THE SPARKS
Import sparks.jpg and change the blend mode to Linear Dodge. Place the sparks as if the wind is blowing

003 | THE SMOKE
Grab a soft brush (B) with colour #fbd784, Opacity at 50% and set it to Screen blend mode. Paint around the model



10 | CREATE THE RAIN

Create a new document at 3000px by 3000px. Select the Brush tool (B) at 35px and draw a straight line vertically on a new layer. Now grab the Eraser tool and carefully erase out the top of the line so that it looks like the top part is faded out. Transform it, Cmd/Ctrl+T, and tilt it. After that, select Edit>Define Brush Preset and go to Brush Presets to change the Shape Dynamics and Scattering values according to your preference on how heavy the rain is.

“Reflect on how materials work in reality and how they interact with each other”



11 | FRONT RAIN AND BACK RAIN

Create a new layer just below the Warm Light layer but above all other layers. Name it 'Overlap Rain' and start painting. Make sure to have the Flow at 30% when you paint. Paint with various sizes of the brush. After that, duplicate the layer, name it 'Behind Rain' and place it below the model layer. Transform it so that the raindrops do not overlap. Create another layer above the Overlap Rain and paint one or two really big raindrops near the corners. This will create depth of field.

12 | THE SPLASHES

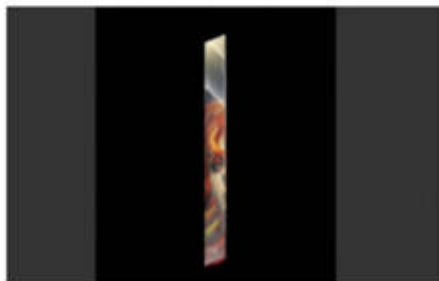
To create realistic rain, it needs to interact with the objects within the composition. Water splashes can easily show how hard the rain is hitting the ground. www.deviantART.com has a lot of users that offer free water splash brushes. Choose one that has transparency and great highlights. Now after installing the brushes, paint around the contour lines of the model from the hair to the shoulder, creating small to medium-size splashes. It almost looks like sparks, but the colour will be white.

13 | GET INTO DETAIL

Before creating reflection plates, look for any mistakes you might have made. It's the best time to correct the mistakes since the layers are going to be merged to create reflections. Go into details such as the eyes. Import a fire image, set it to Linear Dodge and transform it so that it looks like a reflection in the eye. After that grab a soft brush set to Soft Light with colour #c2561f and paint around areas of the model that catch the light from the flames.

THE FINAL DETAILS

CREATE SHARD EFFECTS AND FINAL ADJUSTMENTS



14 CREATE THE SHARD PART 1

Create a new layer on top, press Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+Alt+E to merge all the layers onto the new layer. Right-click the layer and duplicate it into a new document. Select the Pen tool (P) and create three shapes to form a 3D plate. Name the shapes accordingly, with one being the biggest and three the smallest shape on the bottom. Mask the artwork layer by selecting shape one. Duplicate the artwork layer twice and clipping-mask it to the remaining shapes two and three.



15 CREATE THE SHARDS PART 2

Create a new layer and grab a soft white brush to paint along the edges of the top. Create two new layers and repeat for shapes two and three. Clipping-mask the layers onto the shapes that they belong to. Create a new layer, Cmd/Ctrl+click shape one and right click>Stroke>2 to 4 pixels. Cmd/Ctrl+D to deselect and then repeat this step for shapes two and three. Grab the Eraser tool (E) and fade out the strokes from the bottom to the top.

17 ADJUSTMENTS

This is the final revision for the artwork. Correct any mistakes before you merge the layers and sharpen via High Pass. If everything is satisfactory, create a new adjustment layer for Exposure and set the Offset value to +0.126 and Gamma to 0.91. Create another adjustment layer for Vibrance and change the value to +32 and Saturation to +4. Create the final adjustment layer for Levels. Set the black at 5, and white at 241. Group all the layers and name it the group Adjustments.



SIMILAR TECHNIQUES

Here's another of my artworks created for Desktopography. I used similar techniques but here they only focus on light and reflection. Light is a very important factor in creating realistic renders in Photoshop. Study the light and shadow by looking at dark black-and-white photographs. It can really help you in studying how an image can be constructed by just using highlights and shadows.

QUICK TIP

Use different blend modes to determine how each layer reacts to the layers below. Overlay and Soft Light can be used to shade objects with colours, light and dark, while Linear Dodge and Screen focus only on light. Experiment with different blend modes to make an object fit in the composition.



16 IMPORT THE SHARDS

Group all the layers in the plate PSD and duplicate to the artwork PSD. Place it below the model and name it 'Shard 1'. Adjust the clipped artworks and position them according to the shard's environment. Remember to reflect the layer by transforming with Cmd/Ctrl+T and choosing Flip Horizontal. After getting the image right, create a new layer and clipping-mask it to Shard 1. Grab a soft black brush and paint in the shadow cast by the model. Duplicate the shard layers and transform, using Perspective to create the left shard.



18 EXECUTION

Create a new layer on top, Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+Alt+E to duplicate and merge all the layers. Go to Filter>Other>High Pass and set the value around 4px. Change the blend mode to Overlay. Now the artwork is sharp and has more contrast. Create another layer, fill (G) it with black and go to Filter>Noise>Add Noise around 150% with Gaussian ticked. Next change the blend mode to Soft Light at 20% Opacity. Then create a final layer, change the blend mode to Soft Light and paint around the edges to create a vignette.

I ♥ PHOTOREALISM

"MODO was the perfect solution for this project. With its realtime preview, I was able to instantly see my lighting and material setups, which was key to blending the CGI with the photography. Plus, its super fast render speeds helped me meet my very tight deadline!"



Mike Campau

Creative Director / Digital Artist

WINNER PHOTOSHOP WORLD GURU AWARD 2014 - COMMERCIAL

**THE
FOUNDRY.**

 **MODO**

Client: LifeProof - www.lifeproof.com CGI/Digital Art: Mike Campau - www.mikecampau.com Photography: Tim Tadder - www.timtadder.com

CREATE A 3D INFOGRAPHIC

TURN BORING FIGURES INTO A STUNNING ADVERTISING ILLUSTRATION USING THE POWER OF PHOTOSHOP

An infographic is the perfect solution for presenting exact figures in a clear and vivid image.

The main task of an infographic is the simplification and visual representation of data. Too often most infographics are still deadly dull, even with the current progressions in digital art. By gathering your figures into one scene, passing them through Photoshop and adding your creativity, you will hopefully be left with a knock-out image which demonstrates all of the data at a glance to create an effective and engaging advertising image.

There isn't a set recipe for a creative solution that will work in every case, but here are a few tips to get you started:

If your client works with real-world objects or his product is a material object, use it. From woodwork, machinery to cheese-making – almost anything can make an excellent theme for your creation.

Create a mood board around your theme. It will help you visualise and plan out your idea.

Be brave enough to use your boldest ideas. It doesn't matter if no one has done it before you.

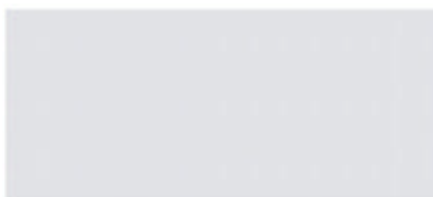
Follow this step-by-step to spark your creativity and inspire you to try your own version.

BRING THE IDEA ALIVE

GET STARTED WITH SKETCHES AND PRELIMINARY IMAGES

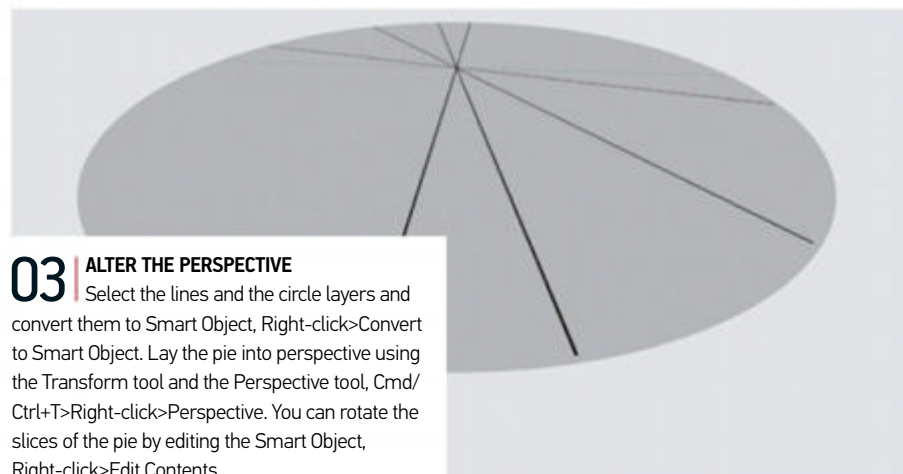
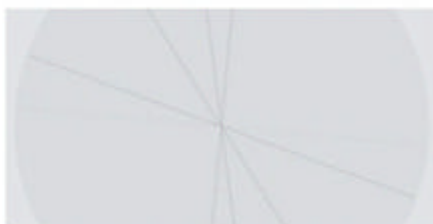
01 CREATE WORKSPACE

Create a new document sized 2835 x 3661 pixels. This size is ideal for 300 dpi printing. Make a light grey background layer. Group it and call it 'BG'. It's boring but try to keep your layers in good order. It's very useful when you have a lot of layers as in this case.



02 MAKE A PLAIN PIE CHART

Draw a line using the Line tool in the middle of the canvas. Copy the layer, Cmd/Ctrl+J, and rotate it, Cmd/Ctrl+T, according to the slices of the pie (13°, 24.9° and 37.4°). Then create a circle using the Ellipse tool from the intersection of the lines, Click+Alt+Shift. The circle should be larger than the lines.



03 ALTER THE PERSPECTIVE

Select the lines and the circle layers and convert them to Smart Object, Right-click>Convert to Smart Object. Lay the pie into perspective using the Transform tool and the Perspective tool, Cmd/Ctrl+T>Right-click>Perspective. You can rotate the slices of the pie by editing the Smart Object, Right-click>Edit Contents.



OUR EXPERT

ANTON EGOROV
www.behance.net/egorov

Egorov is a self-taught CG artist living in Saint Petersburg who mixes Photoshop with 3D applications to create stunning infographics and illustrations. He is currently working worldwide as a freelancer.

SOURCE FILES

You can find the files you need to complete this tutorial at: www.istockphoto.com and www.cgtextures.com.

WORK IN PROGRESS

FROM IDEA TO FINISHED ARTWORK



Progress 1: Create a sketch



Progress 2: Select your source photos



Progress 3: Add the finishing touches

Land bank

70000

hectares

120000 m²
agricultural premises

1300
agricultural
technical units

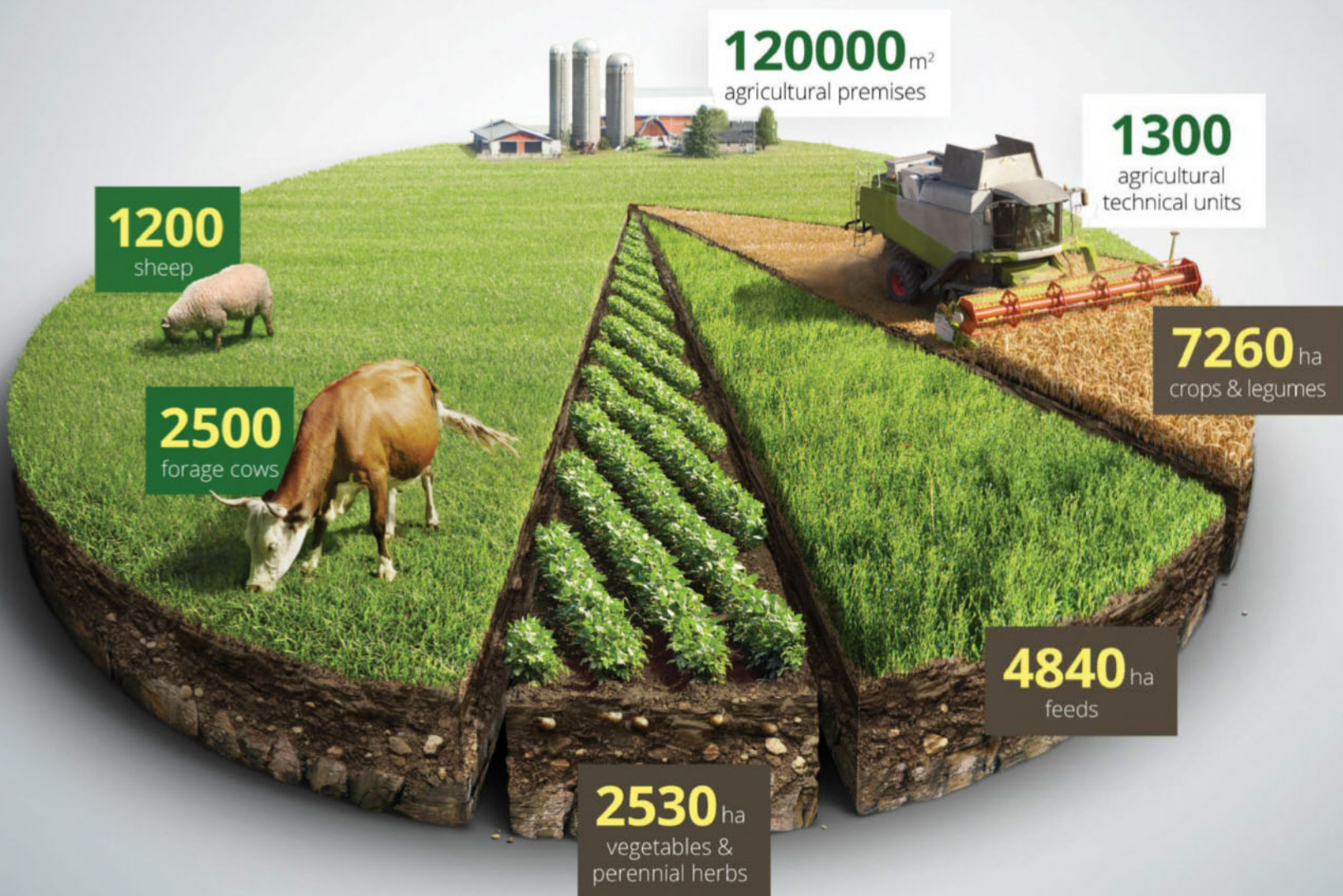
1200
sheep

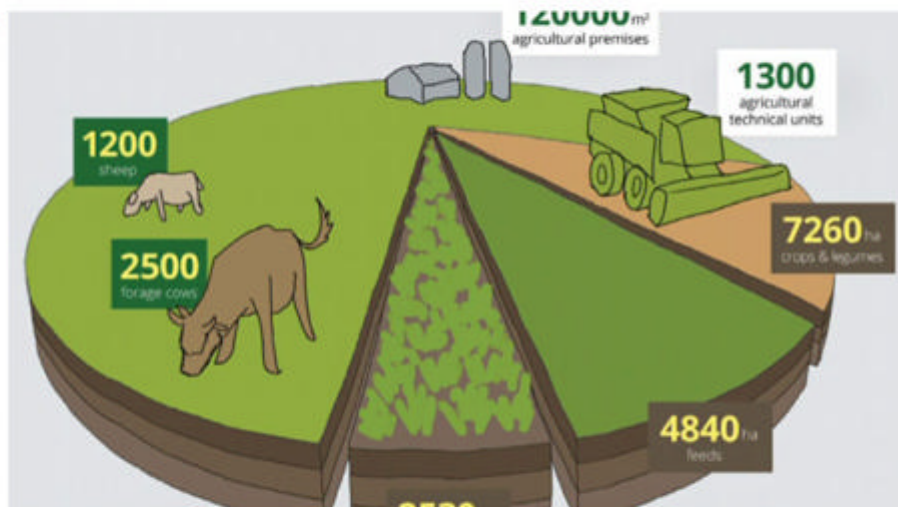
2500
forage cows

7260 ha
crops & legumes

4840 ha
feeds

2530 ha
vegetables &
perennial herbs





04 | DRAW A SKETCH

Now the fun begins! Your task is to create the main composition. Grab the Brush tool and draw your ideas! In this case a pen tablet was used but you can use any kind of technique, drawing, photo-compositing or whatever else you want. Don't forget about the bubbles. It's very important to create them at the sketch step because they influence the composition and if you forget about them you probably won't be able to find room for them on your final illustration.



06 | DRAFT SURFACE TEXTURES

It's time to select photos for the surface. You can find any other photos of grass, wheat and potato bushes or use '17130460', '19639229', '17827429', '17404693' and '19549044' from istockphoto. Make a group for each surface. Create rough masks for them just using the Magic Wand tool on the sketch. To make mown wheat behind the harvester just copy the grass photo and make it yellow using Hue/Saturation. Don't forget the perspective and the light.



07 | DRAFT SOIL TEXTURES

To make the soil look good, use different textures for the soil layers. Let's make three soil layers. You'll need something like rich soil, gravel and rock. Go to www.cgtextures.com, find the 'Gravel0159' set and download it, do the same for 'SoilRough0067'. Then find and download the 'RockJagged0018' photo. Create a group for each soil layer as well. You don't need to fill all sides, just make sure that the textures look good. Don't forget about proportionality.

■ QUICK TIP

In photomanipulation, having good source photos is half the success. If you can't take some photos by yourself be patient when searching for them. Study all of the search features on your favourite photo stock site. Use proper tags and you will find stunning pictures really quickly!



05 | DRAFT OBJECTS

So, now you need a pile of photos of a cow, a sheep, a harvester and a farm. Go to your favourite photo stock site and collect as many appropriate photos as you can. Or you can use '31172838', '10122563', '50984500' and '21186493' from www.istockphoto.com. Make sure that they fit the perspective of the sketch and they have the same light direction. Place preview photos on the sketch using rough masks.



08 | COLOUR CORRECTIONS

Your task on this step is to harmonise the photos with each other. Begin with the soil layers. Bring them together using brown Solid Fill Layers in Soft Light Mode, Brightness/Contrast and Levels Adjustment Layers. Then make the surface photos a bit brighter. Strongly enhance saturation of the wheat using Hue/Saturation layer. Don't worry about the potatoes, we'll get to them later. To make objects more natural, tune them slightly using different adjustment layers. You can hide their masks, Shift+Right-click on the mask, to be guided with the grass colour.

■ STOP SKETCHING AND GO HIGH-RES!

PLACE HIGH-RES PHOTOS AND MASK THEM

09 | REPLACE PREVIEWS WITH HIGH-RES PHOTOS

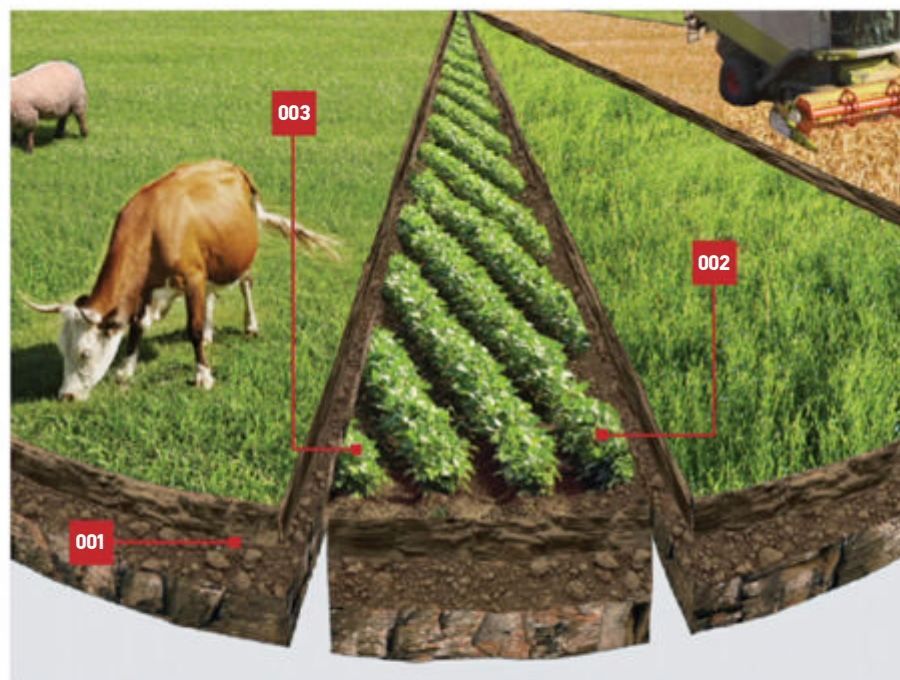
So your draft is finished. Check once more to make sure that you don't have any photos that look out of place. Especially pay attention to perspective. It's the most important factor to reach a realistic look. The second one is the light direction. You can improve it slightly but changing it completely can be a really hard task. If everything looks good, replace the photos with high-res ones. Use the same masks and adjustment layers.

10 | TRANSFORM SOIL TEXTURES

At the moment you need to lay the soil textures on the sides of the pie. Convert the 'RockJagged0018' and 'SoilRough0067' textures to Smart Objects. Double the 'SoilRough0067' texture for the long parts. Before using the Warp tool for curving, use the Free Transform tool to move edges of the Smart Object to the edges of a side. Don't forget about the perspective. Then use the Warp tool to reach a proper shape. For the middle layer just turn it into a pattern, Edit>Define Pattern, Layer>New Fill Layer>Pattern.

11 | MAKE THE POTATOES

In order to make the surface of the potato slice you'll have to join two photos – the edge on the front and the field in the background. Above all, add contrast to the frontal bushes to make it as close to the background bushes as possible. Mask the group with the edge photo and remove part of the bushes with a rough brush. The Rough Round Bristle from default Photoshop brushes works really well. Then follow the annotated steps on the picture below.



001 | DESATURATE THE SOIL
Tune the soil colour with adjustment layers. Group them. Mask the group and clear the bushes with a rough black brush

002 | END BUSH LINES
Copy the middle soil layer to the potato group. Create a black mask on it and draw the soil on the ends of the lines with a rough white brush

003 | ADD A BUSH
Make a copy of the potato field layer and cut one of the bushes from it. Then place it on the left side of the potato slice

“ Especially pay attention to perspective. It's the most important factor to reach a realistic look ”



12 | MASK OBJECTS

Refine your rough masks of the objects using different brushes or the Pen tool. Don't be too precise though, only do it where it's noticeable. There is a trick to create a good mask for complicated objects like the harvester. Make a new layer above it, open the Layer Style window and choose a vivid colour for the Color Overlay. Then paint the harvester with different tools. Make a selection from the layer, Cmd/Ctrl+Click on the layer icon, and apply it as a Mask for the harvester.



13 | IMPROVE THE MASKS

In order to make the masks of the objects more natural-looking, let's pay more attention to the surface where they are placed. Remember, it's grass, so the shadows and the lower edges of the objects cannot be absolutely smooth. To improve them just grab a small hard brush and draw blades of grass on the edges of the masks. Don't forget about the top edges of the shadows. They need some blades too! ▶

► LIGHTING AND DETAILS

CREATE A 3D LOOK USING LIGHTING AND SHADOWS

14 LIGHTING OF THE PIE

As you can see on the source photos the sun is on the right. To create a 3D look add some highlights and shadows to the pie. Go to the soil groups and create in them new layers in Overlay and Normal modes. Draw shadows on the left sides using a huge soft black brush with a low Opacity of 5-10%. Do the same for highlights using a white brush. Now add some aerial perspective on the surface. Make a group with a black and white gradient mask (white on the top) and lighten the distant parts of the pie using a Brightness/Contrast layer. Add a bit of blue with Color Balance.



■ HAVE A FRESH LOOK AT YOUR WORK

From time to time check your illustration using these handy tricks. The first one is the flip trick. Merge all layers on the top, Alt+Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+E, flip it horizontally and you will see any flaws that you hadn't noticed before. It works because your brain can recognise a rotated image as an already-seen one but when an image is flipped it sees it as a new one. Next is the contrast trick. Desaturate the merged layer and you will see any trouble in the contrast. And last but not least is the zoom trick. Zoom out of your work a lot and you'll be able to catch sight of any weaknesses in the composition.

15 DROP SHADOW

Create a group below the pie. Make a selection from the mask of the 'Soil' group. Blur it using the Gaussian Blur filter with a small radius of 1-2. Create a black ellipse looking like the bottom of the pie. Rasterize it then blur it using Motion Blur filter (0° and 30-70 distance) then blur it with Gaussian Blur (10-30). Move it a bit to the left. Group the shadows and remove any shadow at the crevices using a mask and black brush. Make a copy and blur it with a huge radius. Tune the opacities to reach the best result.



16 SOIL TRANSITION

Next you need to make the borders between the soil layers more natural. Improve the soil masks using rough black and white brushes with Opacity 70-100%. Don't think too much, just follow your instincts. In order to join the soil layers, copy the texture from the top layer and group below it. Desaturate it and turn the layer mode to Overlay. Tune the intensity of the folds with a Brightness/Contrast layer. Then curve the edges of the side of the pie using the Smudge tool with 50% strength.



17 STONES GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT

If an illustration whets the appetite it means it's a realistic piece of artwork. You have created a pie; so let's add some tasty details. Create a Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer above the soil groups but below the Lighting one. Lighten the soil and enhance the contrast in such a way as to make the stones look like nuts good enough to eat. Mask the layer with black, then grab a rough white brush and reveal some yellow stones on the middle soil layer. Yum!



18 ADD SOME ROOTS

It's a detail that can bring more life to the illustration. But it's hard to find a good tiled photo of real grass roots so let's try to find something similar. Go to www.cgtextures.com and download 'GrassDead0042' tiled texture. Open the file, select all, Cmd/Ctrl+A, and define new pattern. Create a Pattern Fill Layer below the 'Lighting' group and tune the colour of the roots using Brightness/Contrast and Hue/Saturation layers. Then mask the pattern layer with black and reveal roots using a rough white brush.



■ QUICK TIP

Know, use and love different adjustment layers. They allow you to do some fine-tuning without any losses to the source image. This approach is very helpful in a real-life workflow when you always have to change things that you'd thought you'd already finished.

19 | POTATO TUBERS

You have created grass roots but what about the potato bushes? Go to a photo stock site and find potatoes or use '17638378' from www.istockphoto.com. Place it into the 'Soil' group. Cut some nice tubers (stems) and move them beneath the bushes. Group them and hide parts of the potatoes using the group mask and a rough black brush. Draw shadows and highlights using clipped layers on the group. If the colour is too vivid desaturate it a bit. Grab the Brush tool and draw drop shadows.



22 | TUNE THE COLOURS

In order to blend the objects into the scene even more, create new clipped layers in Soft Light mode. For each of them pick the environment colour with the eyedropper and draw some colour reflections on the lower parts of the objects using a huge soft brush. Then improve the colour of the harvester. Make a mask for the green colour with the Lasso tool and different brushes. Tune the colour using a green Solid Color Fill layer.



■ QUICK TIP

An important tip that's not about Photoshop; do what you love. It should be about having fun and not just about money. Put your soul and personality into your work and you'll be able to create top-notch products.

20 | SURFACE EDGES

The next step is improving the surface masks. It's mainly grass so create a special brush for it (F5). Use ellipse form and Scattering to make a brush like on the screenshot. Just use it in black and white colour on the edges of the masks. You need to add shadows and highlights on the sides of the high grass and the wheat so that the edges look better and more realistic. Use the same brush in Normal and Overlay modes.

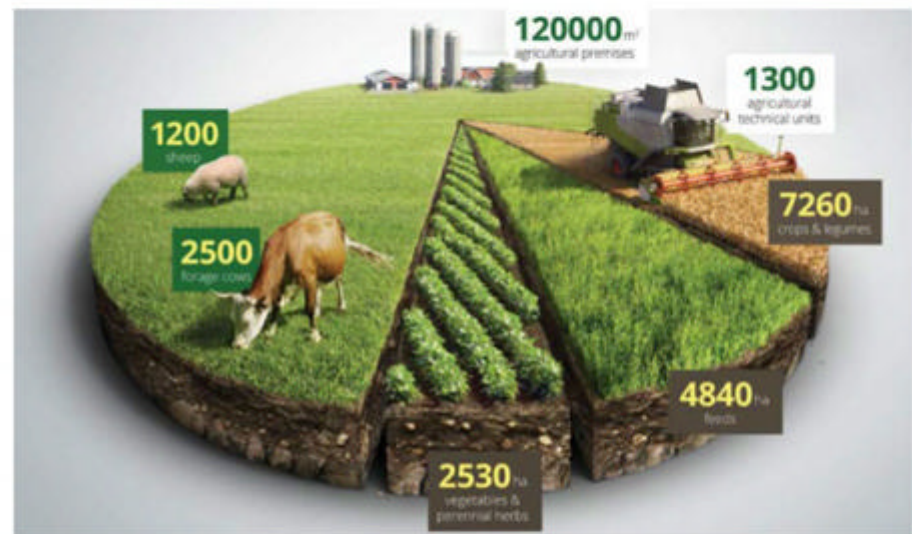


23 | TWEAK THE SHADOWS

The shadows of the objects still show their origin. Improve them with the 'Grass' brush that you have used on the edges of the surface masks. Use it to refine the masks of the objects and to add some more shadows with a dark green colour. Also you need to create the drop shadow for the harvester on the feed slice. Make a selection from the vivid harvester mask. Create new Layer in Normal Mode and just draw the shadow with the 'Grass' brush.

21 | LIGHTING OF THE OBJECTS

Proper lighting is a very important part of great visualisation. Make sure the source photos are really close to each other in terms of lighting so you just need to tune them slightly. Create a new layer in Overlay mode for each object and improve the lighting using huge soft brushes with a low Opacity of 5-10%. The black parts of the sheep are too dark so lighten them a bit with a Selective Color adjustment layer. Choose Black in the Color Select field and move the Black slider to the left to 2-5%.

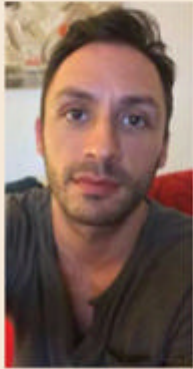


24 | FINAL TOUCHES

Almost there! Unhide the bubbles and create a grey gradient on the background to add a bit of depth. Use the flip trick in order to look for any final flaws that need to be fixed. Add one more detail, cut some stones from the middle soil layer and place them on the grey background near the pie. Draw drop shadows in with a soft black brush. Now have a final look at the illustration. It's finished!



“Western allies were present, so western men at arms could be shown but with the main action and point of view placed on the Ottoman side”



FINAL ASSAULT ON CONSTANTINOPLE WALLS, 1453

JOSE DANIEL CABRERA PEÑA

DISCOVER HOW THIS TALENTED ARTIST CREATED AN ILLUSTRATION INSPIRED BY HISTORY

Spanish-born artist and illustrator Jose Daniel Cabrera Peña (www.iouee.cgsociety.org/) was first commissioned to create *Final Assault on Constantinople Walls, 1453* as an illustration and matte painting for *Medieval Warfare Magazine*.

It was a project many artists would have found intimidating to say the least. Peña needed to represent one of the darkest days in western civilisation, detailing the brutality and chaos of the fall of Constantinople in a historically accurate way. "I

actually lacked enough documentation to portray 15th Century Byzantine troops [accurately]," he says, "but we know western allies were present, so I realised western men at arms could be shown but with the main action and point of view placed on the Ottoman side."

To create the piece, Peña began by deciding on key focal point figures and poses to add a powerful narrative, as well as searching for any references he could find to bring the action of 1453 straight to the viewer today.



01 FINDING REFERENCE

I started with a photo of some broken and eroded towers from the old wall rings that protected the city. I found these really fit the image of what they would have looked like after the heavy bombardment inflicted by the Ottomans.



02 CREATING ATMOSPHERE

After lowering the impact of the strong dark shadows (photographic default flaws) and the strength of the sky blue tone, I choose to strengthen the tower's presence in the composition and paint over it to get a more painterly feel.

THE IMAGE CREATION PIPELINE

JOSE DANIEL CABRERA PEÑA REVEALS HOW HIS WORKFLOW FOR IMAGE CREATION DOESN'T INVOLVE WORKING IN A STRICT LOGICAL ORDER

"Permanent postproduction mock-ups were made at every point from the start to the end of this piece, so please do not consider the postproduction or any other of these steps as done in this strict order! They were instead all worked simultaneously or in a rather random pattern that puts experimentation and tests as the most useful tool in image creation."



03 PAINTING THE DAMAGED SIEGE TOWER

Still in the basic photo collage phase, I continued searching for construction references and painted the basic structure of what a damaged siege tower would look like. At this stage I started considering what the main lighting effect would be and decided a strong backlight in the assault focal point would play a major role in selling the idea of the difficulty involved in reaching the top.

04 CREATING ROCKS AND RUBBLE Next I continued to create the rocks and rubble, burying the tower's base and starting to search for the cooler tones to separate them from the top warmer colours to add colour depth. Until now, the work is mostly based in photobashing and value adjustments.

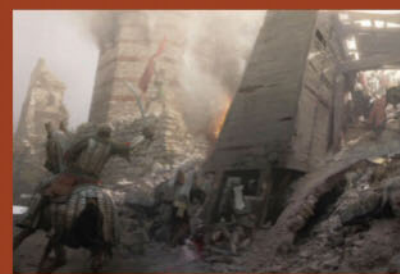


05 BEGINNING HUMAN ELEMENTS Living elements start to be added to the painting, from the all-painted central Ottoman flag-bearer figure to the Photoshop smoke, made using a special custom-made smoke Photoshop brush.



THE IMAGE CREATION PIPELINE

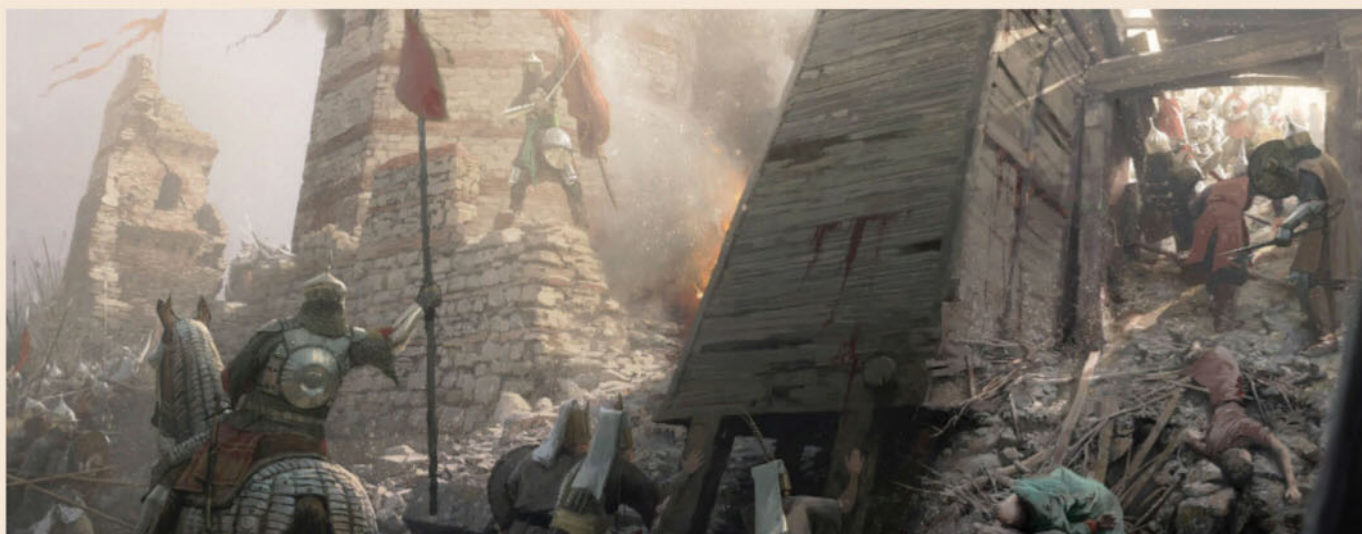
The real image-creation process for Jose Daniel Cabrera Peña would be closer to a back-and-forth random testing with filters, tools, shapes, and compositions.



06 PAINTING IN OTTOMAN JANISSARIES The central figures of the painting, Ottoman Janissaries, are line-drawn and hand-made. I first took the poses from a photo of some men pushing a car, dressed the mannequins as Janissaries, then coloured in a base layer underneath the line-drawing layer using environment picked colours. Finally, I coloured on top to hide the line drawing and make the light pop.



07 OVERPAINT WORK In this phase I did vast overpaint work, trying to make all the painting 'brush language' match or be even.



08 POST PRODUCTION The over effects, or postproduction, was very important for this piece. Not only to allow the whole painting to have a gritty and dirty feel, but also to create a dense atmosphere in the upper half of the

painting, with strong particle effects, versus a cooler lower half with better visibility because of the non-highlighted atmosphere particles. Here it was key to make good use of Photoshop's Layer Style

menu with the Blend If Gray discriminator, Layer>Layer Style>Blending Options>Blend If Gray, which will allow you to hide an atmosphere effect if darker colours are underneath.

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MASTER PRO PAINTING TECHNIQUES

LEARN HOW TO PAINT A FUTURISTIC, ECO-FRIENDLY CITYSCAPE USING PHOTOSHOP'S BRUSHES AND TOOLS

Anticipation, literature and painting have for centuries been the main source of creative inspiration when thinking about the future. In our times, this is a genre of illustration that has become a dominant form of expression thanks to the burgeoning growth of the videogame and sci-fi cinematography industries. However, it's usual to find the very same ideas depicted in different industry projects time and again, so the continuous search for original points of view is a must in this kind of work.

Photoshop is clearly the best tool choice. It is the ideal application to simulate traditional painting techniques, which get improved through the

program's powerful colour correction, masking, filtering and brush tools. Consequently it allows you to work at lightning speed compared to some traditional mediums. Photoshop is also a great environment to work with your visual references and elaborate your ideas from them. However, keep in mind that there is no digital replacement for artistic research and planning, which will always be the foundation of good design work, independent of your medium.

In this tutorial, you will learn how to plan and paint your own futuristic vision in Photoshop, from documentation and sketching to the final stages of a fully detailed painting, working extensively with brushes, layering and adjustment tools.



OUR EXPERT

ANDRES AVARAY
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Andres Avaray is a digital artist who has worked mainly in the videogames industry, animation, short films and illustration. He especially enjoys conceptualising mad and unique fantasy ideas.

■ PLAN YOUR PAINTING

FROM REFERENCE TO PAINTING THE BASE LAYER



01 | REFERENCE FOR IMAGINATION

I store a personal archive of thousands of real world pictures gathered over the years. They are about history, architecture, nature, art and real people. It is important to store in both the unconscious mind and hard drives whatever boosts your imagination, and revisit it when researching a new artwork. Adobe Bridge is a nice tool for browsing references.

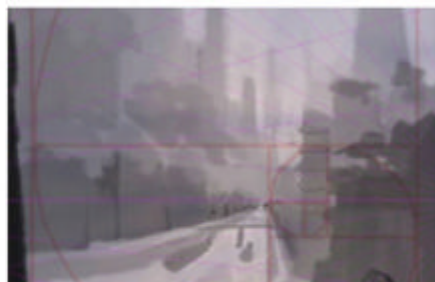
03 | PLAN THE COMPOSITION

Time for a strong composition. You can learn about this from Andrew Loomis books and articles about the golden ratio and rule of thirds. Use a low-detail tool like a wide Conte brush, working out the element placement and overall feeling. Working in black-and-white allows us to define rough compositional depths. Overlay guide layers to check that the composition and perspective is really working.



02 | THUMBNAIL IDEAS

Sketch ideas after you become inspired. Work on a parcelled-out canvas like this and play with the references, looking for overall forms, not specific details. It is a time to enjoy, so that is why you shouldn't be too worried about what brush tool you are using at the moment. Whatever suits and flows is okay at this stage.



■ WORK IN PROGRESS

FROM SKETCH TO FINAL PAINTING



Progress 1: Sketch and rough lighting



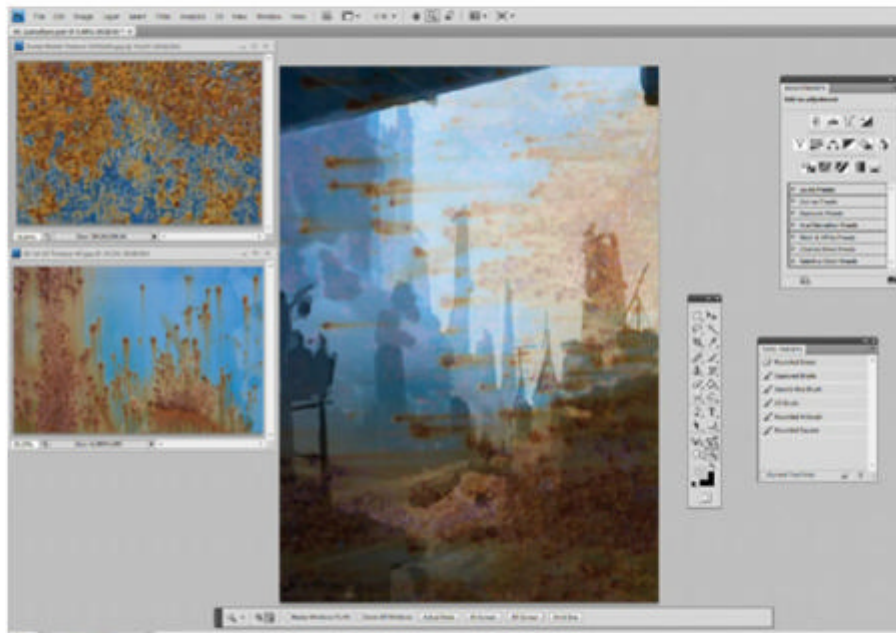
Progress 2: Painting over sketch



Progress 3: Final adjustments



04 | SKETCH AND LIGHT A NEW VIEW
Use a simple brush and draw on a new layer on top of the stack. It is time to combine all the previous planning in a sketch that will serve as the foundation for the work ahead. Avoid too much perfectionism, remember it's only a sketch not a final piece of art. On a lower layer, place a suitable base colour that matches the atmosphere. Over this one, place a new layer in Overlay mode and paint using shades of grey to rough out a first lighting and value setup.



05 | SET UP THE COLOUR PALETTE
A quick way to create a colour palette for this kind of work is to choose a few textures that, when blended over the desaturated value layer, provide some basic tones and grainy detail. The sketch base colour was a deep blue, so the chosen textures are blue with some details in a contrasting colour: orange or red. Masks, blending modes, and Levels and Curves adjustment layers (Layer>New Adjustment Layer) are powerful tools for fine corrections in order to obtain a full palette that serves well at all picture depths.



06 | CREATE A FIRST BASE LAYER
Collapse the base colour, value, textures and adjustment layers into a single one – the base layer. Place your sketch layer over this one to serve as a painting reference from now on. Prepare a soft brush with a low flow (20%) and medium opacity. The Eyedropper tool is an ally at this step, because now we proceed with picking up tones and painting with them, defining our sketched shapes with colours. After finishing, do not hesitate to use Curves or Levels adjustment layers in order to achieve fine corrections.

QUICK TIP

Checking depth is very easy in black-and-white images. Place a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer over all your work. Set the Saturation slider to -100. Make this layer visible every time you need to check that the depth and perspective are working.



07 | PREPARE A GROUP OF MASK LAYERS
This is a long range picture, with a lot of overlapping elements placed from near to far away. In this kind of work it's crucial to keep a correct sense of depth as it's easy to lose it in the painting process. As a preparatory step, create a group of masking layers. Every layer matches a group of elements at a certain depth. You can do the same by saving pixel selections, Select>Save selection, but this way is a more visual and immediate one.



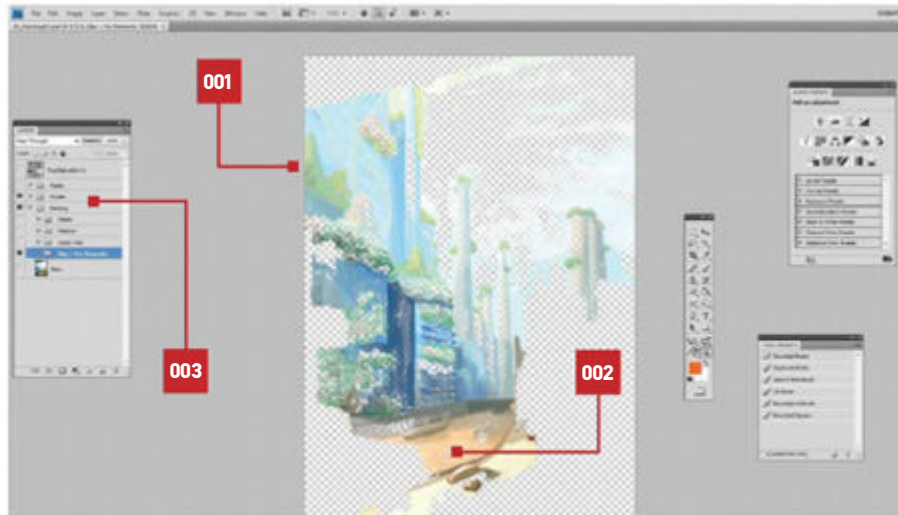
08 | CREATE DEPTH WITH ADJUSTMENT LAYERS
Traditional methods for creating depth require you to individually stroke colours, varying saturation, hue and value until the correct depth is achieved. A far quicker way is to use our recently created masking layers in combination with new Hue/Saturation and Levels adjustment layers. This way you will obtain the colours that provide the correct depth. Do not hesitate to stroke rough details, adding new colours or modifying elements if you feel like it. When finished, merge all onto the base layer in order to maintain a neat layer stack, lower file size and cleaner memory scratch disk.

THE PAINTING PROCESS IN DEPTH

FROM BASE LAYER TO A FINISHED PAINTING

09 BEGIN THE REAL PAINT WORK

We've finally got two solid sketch and base colour layers. It is time to start the real painting work! With a soft brush, define volumes and details using darker and lighter tones picked from the base layer. This will make the painting start to come alive.



001 | FROM DARK TO LIGHT
Work first on the medium and dark tones in your painting. Highlight strokes should be the last ones that you use, lighter colours will act as a guide

002 | WORK GLOBALLY
Do not get too obsessed with any particular detail. Change among painting elements from time to time to keep a global view

003 | LAYER ORDER
Paint layers from far to near. The parts of the painting that are furthest away should be at the bottom of the stack. This helps control overlapping strokes



10 CHECK BEFORE DETAILING

Now the painting should be working nicely but still lack details and look flat. However, this result is the foundation for the following detail steps to work. Feel free to re-paint or add any elements that may improve and boost your painting's composition, value, depth and design. Use contrasting colours to guide the eye through the composition. In this case, warm orange and yellow colours are placed strategically so the eye is guided to the central building in the painting.

“Use contrasting colours to guide the eye through the composition”



11 DETAIL VEGETATION (1)

Use a picture-based brush to place some trunks and branches. Then, lock transparent pixels in the Layers palette. Paint with the same brush in Overlay mode to add extra shading details. On an upper layer, create the foliage with a picture-based leaf brush. Use masked adjustment layers to create quick light and shadow gradients. Picture brushes sometimes give an artificial stamp look that is better to avoid; distort the stamped strokes with the Smudge tool. Use this method for nearby and more detailed vegetation.



12 DETAIL VEGETATION (2)

Another way of painting vegetation is to pick colours from our previous work and paint using a foliage picture-based brush. Again, avoid a stamped look by using the Smudge tool later. This method is suitable for grass and bushes, and also for trees placed far away. It is important when painting vegetation to use a varied palette of green, yellow and grey. Also, remember that colours tend to desaturate and get bluish with the distance. Study and use some vegetation references in order to make it look natural.



13 DETAIL USING TEXTURE BRUSHES

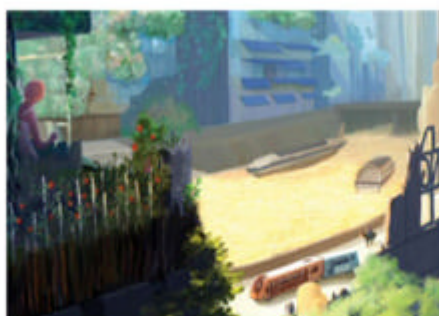
This painting depicts a world of constant recycling, where everything is re-used again and again. That is why the painting should look as organic as possible in its details and at close range. To achieve that stroked texture effect, work on details using organic picture-based brushes. Use Size and Angle Jitters, Window>Brushes>Brush Tip Shape>Shape Dynamics, so the brushes make organic and random marks. You can create brush shapes from virtually any image using Edit>Define Brush Preset.

► MAKE THE PAINT BLOOM

ADD FINE DETAILS, TEXTURES AND ADJUSTMENTS

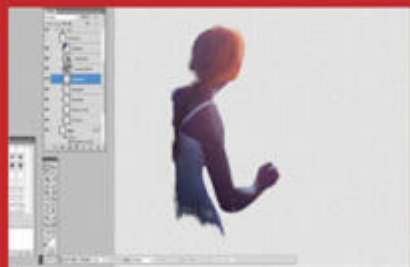
■ QUICK TIP

Textures sometimes create the feel of a photographic collage over a painting. Avoid that by filtering textures with the Median filter, Filter>Noise>Median. This will preserve most of the texture but erase grainy details and create a smooth painted look in the texture.



14 MAKE YOUR WORLD HUMAN

Contextualising this new world is as important as the concept itself. People will have to live, move and work in this scene. Paint some human figures, vehicles or signs of human presence in the painting. Humanising your world will also provide a sense of scale that will turn the artwork into a more accessible one. Because this is a low energy world, vehicles should be manufactured from recycled old ones and electric-powered. Also, some people will have to use animal power for work and transportation.



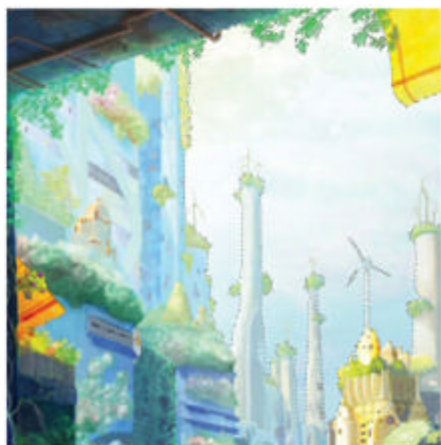
■ SHADING EFFICIENTLY

Shade objects in a structured way. Over the base layer, place a new layer to paint shadows and midtones. Create a new layer to paint highlights. Do not hesitate to play with blending modes to find better results. Another layer may be created to paint fine details. Clip the previous layers among them and use the Gradient Overlay layer style at a low opacity to create quick subtle lighting effects. Do the same with adjustment layers like Levels, Curves or Hue/Saturation. In order to keep the layer stack clean and your computer's RAM less full, collapse all layers into one when happy with the final result.



15 ADD FINE DETAILS

Small details add a lot of eye-catching value to a painting but can be a very time-consuming task. Place details strategically to boost the value of the final work, avoiding excessive detail that will get lost. Use this kind of detail to better explain the world. Windows, signs, urban art, lights or landmarks are all good possibilities. This is a world of constant recycling; that implies maintenance is done using different reused materials. Mix crystal with wood, or stone and concrete architecture in the same buildings.



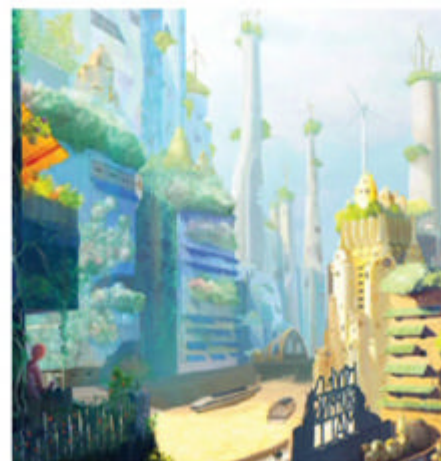
17 FINISH THE SKY

The sky often works as negative space for an illustration. Also, it is possible to create interesting lighting and depth effects with it. First, create a painted mask similar to the ones from step 7. Select some sky photographs and place them over the paint to make the sky more interesting. Use masking and adjustment layers for a fine result that blends the original paintwork with smooth details from the texture combination.



16 TEXTURE THE IMAGE

Do not place textures too soon. A painting should work fine without textures. After adding textures it will gain extra fine details but it should not depend on them. Place them using different blending modes. Overlay and Color modes will be the most frequently used followed by Color Burn, Hard Light, Lighten and Multiply. Different modes mix textures in different ways: choose wisely. Opacities should be lower than 50-60% in order to avoid textures catching the eye too much and altering the previous colour work.



18 FINAL ADJUSTMENTS

Again, the quality of the final work must not depend on brute texture overlays and global adjustments, but should be slightly improved by them. Place some Levels adjustment layers and edit the Red/Green/Blue channels. Avoid making some parts of the picture too dark or burned. Layer masks are able to affect different parts of the image in different ways, simulating subtle light effects. A blurred texture with a similar colour palette placed over the work at low opacity will add some extra fine colour detail.

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“ I believe that a simple idea represented by an unusual image always pleases. So I imagined two athletes playing basketball on a cellphone as if it were the most natural thing in the world ”

© Rodrigo Marinelli



PHONE SPORT

RODRIGO MARINELLI

DISCOVER HOW RODRIGO MARINELLI USED PHOTOSHOP TO COMMENT ON THE WAY THAT SPORTS ARE VIEWED IN HIS HOME COUNTRY

Rodrigo Marinelli has worked in advertising since 2006 and has always been a fan of Photoshop. In this image, part of a series of three that focus on popular sports in Brazil, he wanted to explain the importance of smartphones to today's culture. "Everybody uses their smartphone for everything, even to follow their favourite sport, so I figured [out]

a way to show this to the consumer," Marinelli explains. "I believe that a simple idea represented by an unusual image always pleases. So I imagined two athletes playing basketball on a cell phone as if it were the most natural thing in the world."

Marinelli, whose work can be viewed at rodrigo_marinelli.prosite.com and www.behance.net/rodrigo_marinelli, used the

Pen tool and masks to create the composite image and then a host of adjustment layers including Hue/Saturation, Photo Filter, Levels, and Brightness and Contrast. "[Adjustment layers] are one of the tools I use most, to work with layers of tonal adjustments... The main advantage is that everything is editable, there is no risk of losing the image content."

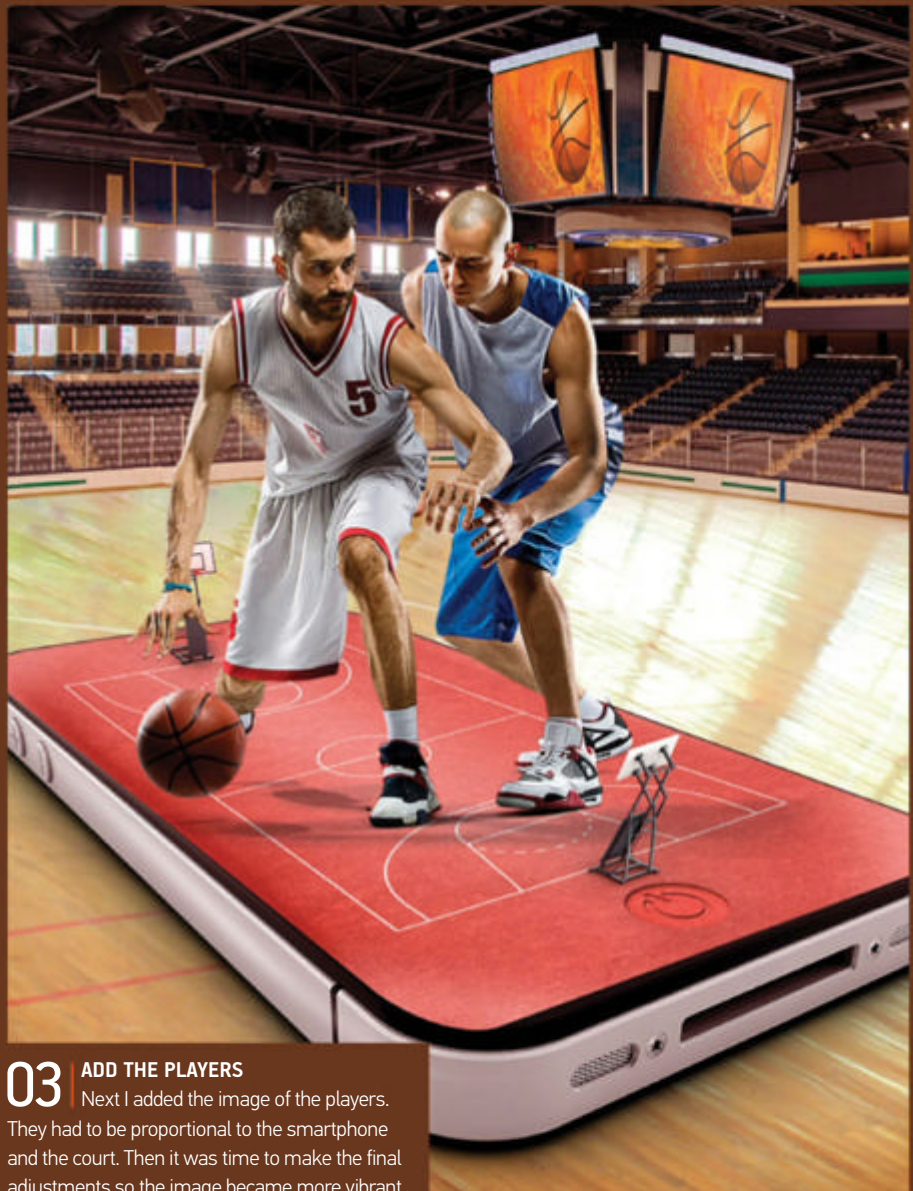
01 SET THE SCENE

First I focused on the floor angle so that I could build the rest of the image. Next I built the floor of the basketball court onto the start photo.



02 CREATING THE SMARTPHONE COURT

The next step was to add the phone into the scene. I had to be very careful that the angle of all the images was aligned. Then I simulated a basketball court inside the smartphone. I needed to take care of the details to make the picture look realistic.



03 ADD THE PLAYERS

Next I added the image of the players. They had to be proportional to the smartphone and the court. Then it was time to make the final adjustments so the image became more vibrant.



SPECIAL EFFECTS

CREATE ICE EFFECT TYPE

LEARN HOW TO GIVE YOUR TEXT
A PHOTOREALISTIC ICE EFFECT

Robert Frost once said the world will end in either fire or ice; consumed by passion or frozen by rationalism. I have a slightly different variation on this; creating fire and ice effects in Photoshop can sometimes *feel* like the end of the world.

Fire and ice are notoriously difficult to replicate convincingly in Photoshop – the graveyard of half-hearted attempts in the images section on the internet is a testament to this. Perhaps it's the fact that they are both forces of nature and therefore their unpredictability is difficult to capture. Or perhaps it's the fact that both elements are non-consistently translucent,

revealing and concealing at their own discretion under a billowing diaphanous cloud of smoke and condensation – an effect that is extremely hard to replicate manually. Too much passion and the effect is overwhelmingly unrealistic, too much rationalism and the image ends up looking stiff and unconvincing.

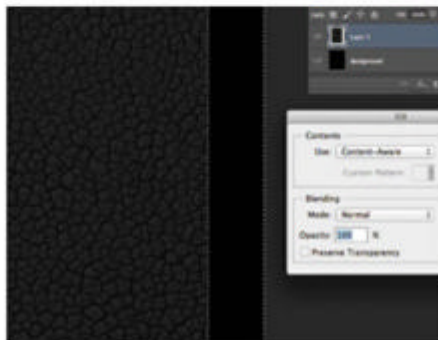
Always up for a challenge, I am going to up the ante by combining both of these dastardly difficult effects in one image. Using Photoshop's powerful adjustments layers and equal measures of passion and rationalism, I am going to prove that creating these effects convincingly doesn't have to feel like the end of the world.

PLATE TECTONICS

CREATE A BACKGROUND FOR YOUR TYPE

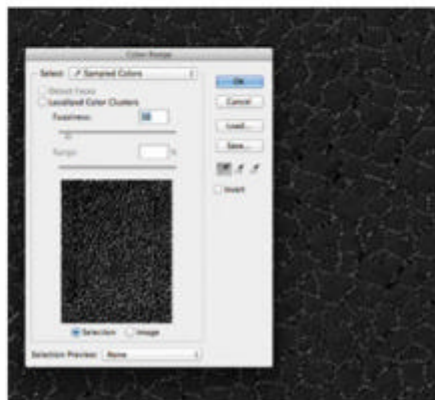
01 FILL THE CANVAS

Fill the canvas in black using the Paint Bucket (G). Drag a cracked earth texture into the canvas. Extend the texture by drawing a boundary using the Polygonal Lasso tool (L) in the areas you need to fill. Select Content-Aware under the Fill command, Edit>Fill, and Photoshop will use the current image to fill in the blank areas.



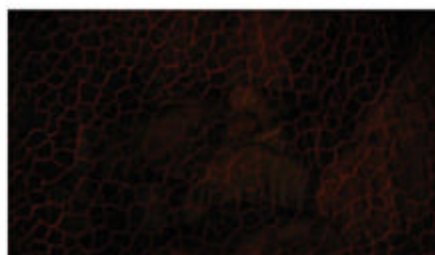
02 SELECT COLOR RANGE

To make the cracks in the earth glow red with magma, select go to Select>Color Range and use the Eyedropper tool to select the cracks. Copy and paste the cracks onto a new layer and double-click on the Layer in the Layers Panel. Select Color Overlay and give it a searing hot red colour.



03 MAKE ADJUSTMENTS

Select the cracked earth texture and the new magma layers in the Layers panel, right-click on them and select Merge Layers. Play with the Levels, go to Image>Adjustments>Levels, and opacity so that it appears convincing. Use the Eraser (E) on a Soft Round brush setting to lightly delete the edges of the magma layer so that it fades into the darkness.

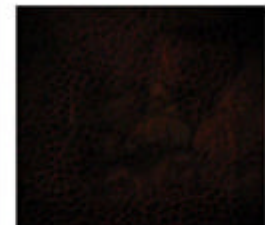


OUR EXPERT

ANDY HAU
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Andy Hau is a London-based architect, designer and the owner of A.H.A Design. For him, design is an escape from the futility of modern life, not an endorsement of it.

WORK IN PROGRESS COMBINE ICE AND FIRE EFFECTS



Progress 1: Set the scene



Progress 2: Create an ice effect



Progress 3: Add steam and condensation

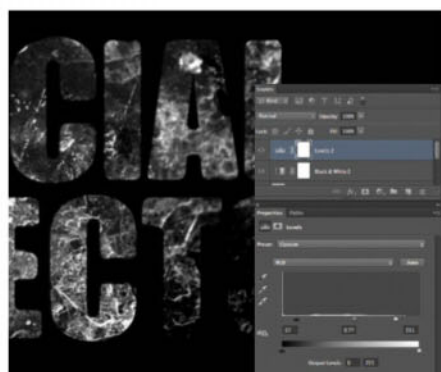


04 | INSERT THE TEXT Merge all of the layers together and forget about it. In fact, better yet, click on the eye icon in the layers panel and hide it altogether. Create a new layer on top and fill it in black again using the Paint Bucket (G). Type in your text using the Type tool (T) – I'm using Impact but feel free to use any font that you like. Adjust the tracking setting in the Characters panel, Window>Character, to change the spacing in between the letters.



05 | CREATE A CLIPPING MASK Right-click on the text layer in the Layers panel and select Rasterize Type. Use the Eraser (E) with a Hard Round brush setting to round off the corners of the letters. Make a copy of this text layer and hide the original – we'll need it later. Drag in the ice texture into the canvas. Place the ice texture layer on top of the copied text layer. Right-click on the ice texture layer in the Layers panel and select Create Clipping Mask. The ice texture will show through the text.

06 | APPLY THE FIRST ADJUSTMENT LAYER Select the ice texture layer and text layer in the Layers panel, right-click on them and select Merge Layers. This will lock in the clipping mask, which means that you won't be able to move the ice texture layer through the clipping mask anymore. To remove the colours in the ice text, apply a Black & White adjustment layer by clicking on the circular icon at the bottom of the Layers panel and select Black & White. Adjust the settings to the suggested values in the screenshot.



07 | BOOST IT WITH ANOTHER LAYER To boost the contrast in the ice text, add another adjustment layer. Click on the circular icon at the bottom of the Layers panel again and this time select Levels. Play with the settings until you get intense areas of black and white. The suggested values in the screenshot are a good starting point but feel free to adjust the settings according to what's right for your image. The more contrast you can get at this point the better – it will help to build the feeling of transparency later on.



08 | ADD MORE TEXTURE To add some more texture to the ice text, unhide the original text layer and repeat Steps 5 to 7. This time however, make sure that you use a different area of ice through your clipping mask. Merge these new layers and place the layer above the ice text layer. Change the blending mode of this new layer to Hard Light. You should have more areas of white and black and the contrast level should have greatly increased.

■ QUICK TIP

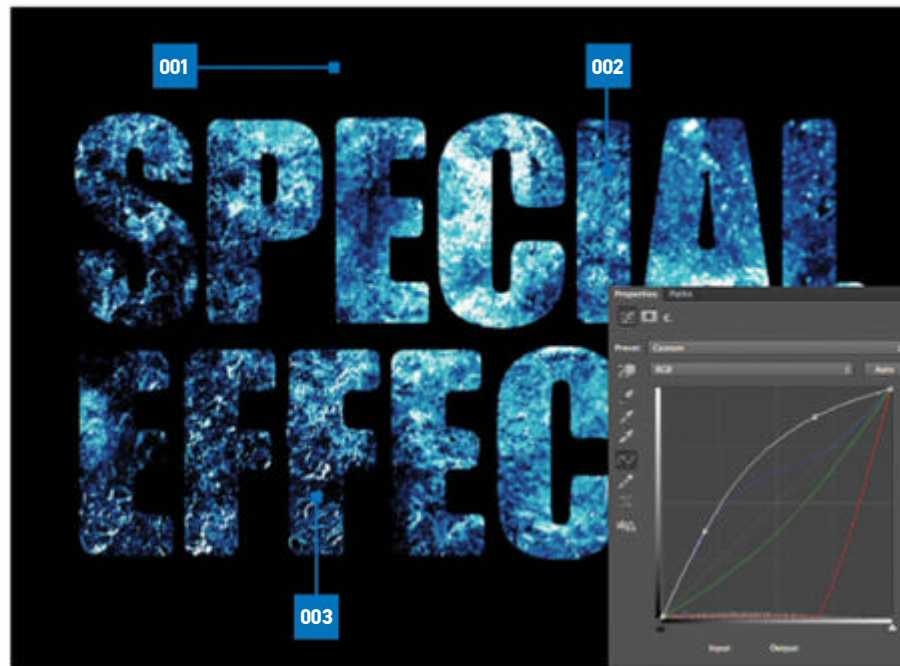
Creating an ice effect isn't an exact science. This tutorial gives you the suggested steps and settings to use but a lot of it will be down to personal judgement and experimentation. Don't be afraid to tinker, adjust and carve up the layers until they give you the effect you want.

FROZEN FRACTALS

CREATE ICY TEXT

09 | ADJUST THE COLOUR

To give the ice text a chilling blue hue, a Curves adjustment layer is required. Click on the circular icon at the bottom of the Layers panel and select Curves. Alter the Red, Green and Blue settings individually by selecting the respective headings in the drop-down menu. Use the suggested values in the screenshot as a basis.



001 | BACKGROUND

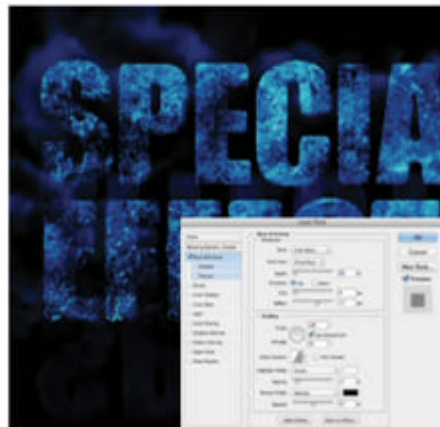
A searing hot magma background was created, which is currently hidden. This layer will be revealed in a few steps' time

002 | ICE TEXT

The basis of the ice text was created using a mixture of clipping masks and adjustment layers

003 | MORE EMBELLISHMENTS

Mist will be added and the ice letters will be given some depth by enhancing the shadows and highlights



11 | BEVEL AND EMBOSS

Select the ice text layer and double-click on it in the Layers panel. In the Layer Style panel, select Bevel & Emboss and select Inner Bevel in the Style drop-down menu and Chisel Hard in the Technique drop-down menu. Set the highlight colour to a white and the shadow colour to black. This will start to soften and blend out the harsh contrasts in the ice texture. Play with the Soften and Size settings to give the ice text some soft shading.



12 | ADD INNER GLOW AND STROKE

With the Layer Style menu still open for the ice text layer, select Inner Glow and adjust the settings until it give the ice text a subtle highlight. Finally select Stroke in the Layer Style menu. Change the Position to Inside, the Blend Mode to Hard Light and the Fill Type to Gradient. This should sharpen the edges of the ice text to give it a sleeker and more defined appearance. Adjust the size and opacity settings for the Stroke as necessary.



10 | INTRODUCE MIST AND CONDENSATION

Create a new layer and use a Soft Round brush (B) or a cloud brush (available for free from the internet) on a very low opacity setting to paint areas of mist and condensation around the letters. Vary the brush's opacity setting and make sure that the mist does not affect the legibility of the text. Use the Eraser (E) on a Soft Round brush setting to softly delete the edges of the mist so that it fades into the background.

“Creating fire and ice effects in Photoshop can sometimes feel like the end of the world”



13 | MERGE LAYERS

Select all the layers apart from the magma background and merge them together. This should give you a layer that contains the blue ice text and mist on a black background. Unhide the magma background layer and set the blending option for the ice text layer to Screen. Your ice text and mist should now be sitting on top of the magma background layer. If the ice text looks faint, copy the layer and change the opacity to get the brightness that you want.

► MIST AND STEAM

CREATE THE VAPOUR THAT TIES BOTH WORLDS TOGETHER



14 MAKE IT GLOSSY

The blue colour of the ice text is likely to be too vibrant for the background. Play with the Hue and Saturation settings, Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation, for the ice text so that it appears natural against the background. Create a new layer and change the blending options to Vivid Light. Use a Soft Round brush on a very low opacity setting to paint over any areas of light on the ice text in white. This will give the ice text a nice glossy and slightly wet appearance.

17 ADD SOME EMBERS

To create embers rising from the magma, create a new layer and use a Soft Round brush (B) to paint some white dots around the letters. Don't forget to include some dots that emanate from the ice text towards the edges of the image. This will help draw the eye back to the text. Double-click on the layer in the Layers Panel and select Outer Glow. Set the colour of the Outer Glow to orange and lower the opacity of the layer.



■ A LAYER MASK ALWAYS PAYS ITS DEBTS

Adjustment layers are a brilliant way to change the colours and levels of an image without affecting the layer permanently, also known as non-destructive editing. To adjust portions of the layer rather than the entire thing, select the Layer Mask in the Layers panel and use the Brush tool (B) to paint in any areas that you do not want to be affected by the adjustment layer. Using black will eliminate the effects of the adjustment layer completely, grey will partially remove the effects of the adjustment layer and white will completely reveal the effects of the adjustment layer.



15 USE LOWLIGHTS

To make the ice text seem more transparent we need to make the dark areas even darker. Create a new layer and change the blending options to Vivid Light. Use a Soft Round brush on a very low opacity setting to paint over any dark areas on the ice text in a deep navy or black colour. Dab the brush in a random manner rather than using long strokes so that the lowlights seem natural and blend smoothly with the highlights into the ice text layer.



16 PAINT AREAS OF STEAM

Use a Soft Round brush (B) or a cloud brush on a very low opacity setting to paint areas of steam around the edges of the image. This will help to draw the viewer's eye towards the ice text. Use a brush with an even lower opacity to paint some steam near the ice text and then use the Eraser (E) on a Soft Round brush setting to lightly delete the edges of the steam so that it fades into the mist.

■ QUICK TIP

Clipping Masks are incredibly useful but creating one is not immediately obvious. To perform a Clipping Mask quickly, place the cutting object layer below the image layer. Hold down Alt and click the line between the two layers in the Layers panel to clip the image to the cutting layer.



18 FINISHING TOUCHES AND REVIEW

Zoom out using Cmd/Ctrl+0 so that entire image fits onto your screen. Check that you are happy with the overall composition. As an optional extra, you might want to add some shattering ice shards behind the text to add some dynamism to the image. This is created using the same steps as creating the ice effects above. Finally, make sure that the magma background layer is not too overwhelming; it should enhance the ice text layer, not compete with it.

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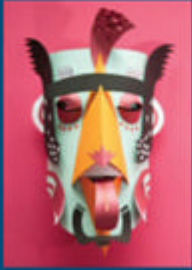
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PAPER DRAGON



PAPER DRAGON

THIBAUT VAN BOXTEL, INK STUDIO

DISCOVER HOW INK STUDIO COMBINES REAL PAPER-CRAFT WITH 3D AND PHOTOSHOP TECHNIQUES TO CREATE THIS INCREDIBLE IMAGE

Thibaut van Boxtel is one of the founders of INK Studio, a Brussels-based creative studio covering illustration, graphic design, photography and much more. Their papercraft work is what makes them really stand out, and one of their most loved works is *Paper Dragon*. Thibaut van Boxtel takes up the story: “We made this paper design in 2013. At the beginning,

we only planned to make a big rock. Our creation process is such that we don't have a clear representation of the finished work, every one of us can give propositions during the creation... The *Paper Dragon* could have been named Paper Rock! Our paper works are the results of alchemy between every person who works on them. It wouldn't be the same with different participants.”

The studio has recently undergone a complete online re-brand. “We had to change... This re-design allows us to present ourselves in a more professional way, and to show that INK Studio is growing up. We want to promote paper design in our projects, even if we've use paper for several years now, and we want to take a new direction and improve ourselves.”



01 THE BRAINSTORM

This step was the starting point of our work. Each one of us brought ideas and inspirations and we proceeded to pool them. The main idea was defined by grafting in other subsidiary ideas.



02 THE ROCK

At the beginning, there was only a big rock, medieval houses, and a long waterfall. The first thing we had to do was to choose colours and model the rock with a 3D program.



03 MANUFACTURING THE ELEMENTS

This was the most tedious part of the work. Every element is carefully cut, folded and pasted. At the same time, other ideas started enriching the project.

- 04 | EMERGENCE OF THE DRAGON** We wanted to add something that 'dressed up' the rock – something was missing. After a discussion and some drawings the dragon emerged. After this decision other elements had to be adapted – the 'splashes' were the first waterfall we made, but it didn't work so we reused it.



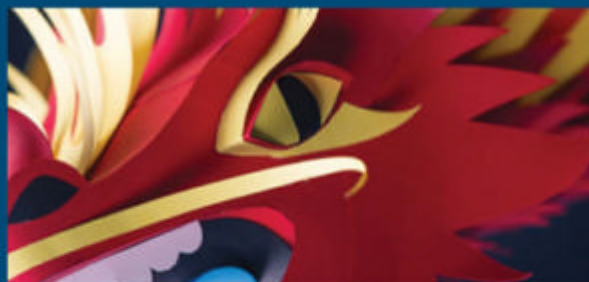
- 05 | GETTING THE LAYOUT RIGHT** When every piece is ready, it's a question of finding the right layout and the best point of view for photography.



- 06 | IMAGE PROCESSING** Here we started the image processing in Photoshop. The first thing was to correct imperfections and paper defects (glue or folding). The rendering on the screen had to be perfect.



- 07 | DEEP ETCHING** After cleaning the image, the next step was the deep etching. The outlines and the shapes had to be clear. From there, we insert blurs, background patterns and other little effects.



- 08 | FINISHING TOUCHES** To finish, this last step consisted of adjusting Brightness, Contrast, Saturation, Levels and Curves – everything it needs to make you see it for real!



WORKING WITH PAPER CRAFT

HOW INK COMBINES PAPER WITH DIGITAL TECHNIQUES

Our main tools are paper, and our hands! More seriously, we work with scalpels, glue, adhesive tape, and rulers. Sometimes, we resort to Illustrator to create a perfect drawing, but the major part of our work is handmade. For the Paper Dragon, we used a 3D model. We base our paper work on drafts and drawings before we start to create. Colours and other elements come gradually after.





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20 TIPS FOR BETTER ADVERTISING

CREATING ADVERTISING IMAGES WITH IMPACT IS A SKILL THAT TAKES YEARS TO PERFECT. PRO DIGITAL ARTISTS AND PRODUCTION STUDIOS EXPLAIN ALL



Designed by Noem9 Studio © 2015

01. USE GRADIENT MAP LAYERS FOR IMPACT

Art director Jose Garrido (www.noem9studio.com) creates elaborate illustrations for his clients, and Photoshop is where the important final touches and finishing effects are put in place: "When it comes to working on illustrations [and] letterings, Photoshop is always the program where I import my vector files or 3D renders to add cool effects and last details. I couldn't get any of my results without going through Photoshop; it's where the illustrations finally come alive. You can

use Illustrator or Cinema 4D to create a complete illustration, but even when you think it's perfect, importing it to Photoshop and playing around with colours and adjustment layers will create a much richer final artwork."

He uses a wide variety of different tools in the program, but he has his particular favourites: "My most used elements in Photoshop are the adjustment layers. I always use them for colour correction and adding depth in any illustration. A

Gradient Map layer, mixed with a Levels layer and a couple of subtle noise layers, on top of an image can work wonders.

"Using Gradient Map layers to get some more interesting colours is a must. You never know how much an image can be improved by using these and changing their blending modes. If you have problems finding the best colours for an illustration, or just want to make them pop, you have to try it – it always works for me."

02. HAVE A PROFESSIONAL WORKFLOW

ART DIRECTOR FRANK SANDRES (WWW.BEHANCE.NET/FRANKSANDRES) TALKS US THROUGH THE PROCESS OF CREATING A GREAT ADVERTISING IMAGE FROM CONCEPT TO COMPLETION



01 | HAVE A STRONG CONCEPT

The first thing to start a briefed campaign is to have a strong insight with a familiar background. In this case, the big problem was to make parents [want to] buy educational toys for their children instead of regular ones. We [worked up] a preview sketch showing a solution.



02 | RIGHT PEOPLE FOR THE JOB

Get the professionals to do their work. Always develop teamwork. If you have people on your team who are good at illustration, copywriting, 3D and so on, let them do the best they can. This case required modelling work, so we made this the main part of the process.



03 | BRING IN PHOTOSHOP

Photoshop is an amazing tool for details. I used it to clean up the modelled illustration, fix colour balance and build up a proper environment. An important part of the process is to sharpen the image by duplicating all the layers, flattening, desaturating and using the High Pass filter, before putting this layer on Soft Light.

03. GET INTO THE INDUSTRY

Getting started in the advertising industry is difficult, as it requires skill, passion and drive. However, it is also a fulfilling industry to get into. Tom Nicklin at LOVE (WWW.STORIESBYLOVE.COM) shares his top tips for designers who want to make a career out of creating commercial visuals: "There are two factors: the idea and the execution, and both need practice. When it comes to advertising, it's important not to get caught up in your own conceptual world. You have a message

to send, and your idea should take that to interesting, entertaining, but not confusing, places. The customer needs to understand the message you're sending, otherwise what's the point?

"Execution is equally important: you might have the best idea in the world, but if the visual doesn't look believable, it will distract from the message.

"So, work hard on your conceptual thinking and strive to be technically adept at Photoshop, because if one is weak the other will suffer."



© LOVE

04. COME UP WITH A CONCEPT

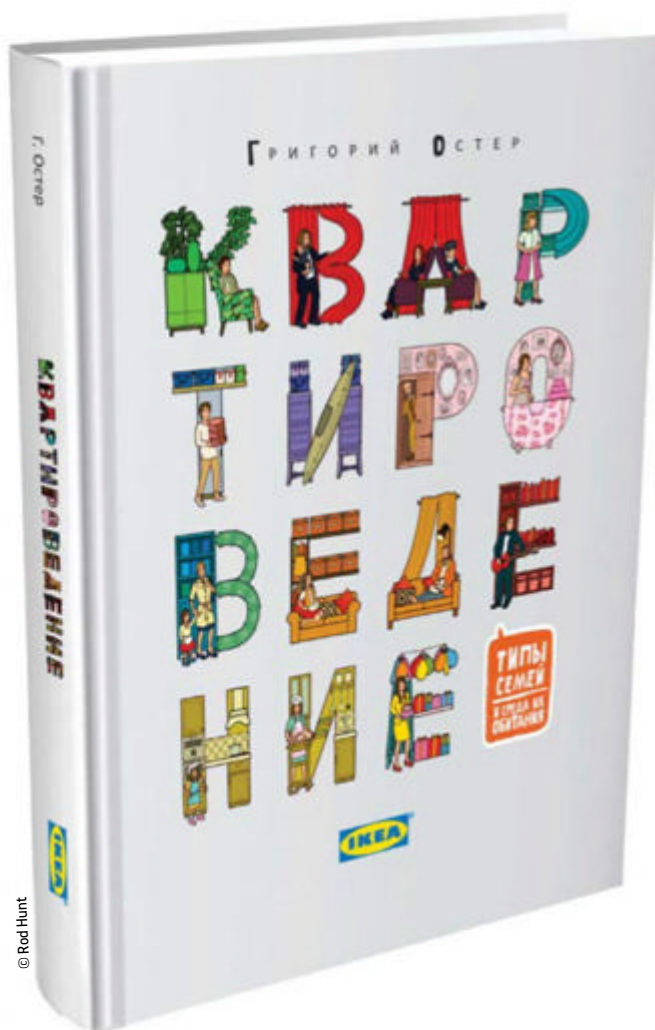
Looking at a brief and coming up with a strong concept is a skill that any designer or studio needs to master. The team at Taylor James (WWW.TAYLORJAMES.COM) knows the key: "Without doubt it's listening. At Taylor James, the first thing is thoroughly knowing the product you're advertising, the client's goals and message they want to convey. We then create treatments that explore our ideas and set out a clear production approach that considers available time, budget and resources. We only

ever sell through a production we know we can 'knock out of the park'.

"Within this campaign for Progressive Insurance, we worked closely with the creatives at Arnold, Boston, to help develop the concepts further. The overall ideas show Flo [Progressives' iconic star] reflected in various motorcycle scenes. We developed the Airstream concept within twisting mountain roads to feature the touring Honda Goldwing. This is just one example how we look to add value with all clients."



© Taylor James



► 05. ESSENTIAL ADVICE FOR GETTING STARTED IN ADVERTISING

ILLUSTRATOR ROD HUNT ([WWW.RODHUNT.COM](http://www.rodhunt.com)) SHARES HIS INSIGHTS ON HOW YOU CAN BREAK INTO THE ADVERTISING INDUSTRY

SHOWCASE YOUR STYLE

Advertising is always on the lookout for something new that fits a specific campaign's brief, so create work with your own unique voice. Artists' personal work can directly influence agencies to hire them to create a campaign inspired by that work.

BE VISIBLE

It's important to make your work visible to commissioners. It's usually the art buyer who will source illustrators and deal with negotiations. They will look for talent in various places, often starting with the web. I'm still a great believer in quality print promotion so it's good to target art buyers directly with something memorable and well produced. Some of my biggest advertising commissions have come from my print mailers.

PREPARE FOR PRESSURE

Advertising commissions can be very intense, with quick high-pressured turnarounds to meet deadlines, so be prepared. The agency will want to be confident that you can answer the brief, deliver on time and to a satisfactory quality. It's important to be professional at all times and keep in regular communication with the agency during the creation of the work.

KNOW YOUR WORTH

Be sure of what questions to ask about rights, usage and territories where the work will be used, as that will affect the price to quote. Advertising has its own language with phrases like 'Buyout', 'Above the line' and 'Below the line', so ensure you know what these mean or seek clarification. Fees can be considerably larger than for other areas, so if you're unsure what to quote and aren't represented by an artists' agent, I recommend getting professional pricing advice from the Association of Illustrators.

06. UNDERSTAND A BRIEF

Rod Hunt (www.rodhunt.com) is an illustrator who has worked with a wide range of clients, who come to him for his exceptionally detailed illustrations. He is used to working within the parameters of a tight brief and shares his advice for those just starting out in the industry: "[In] advertising, [clients] will usually have a clear vision of what they're wanting to say and may even supply you with a mock-up of the campaign layout and concept. It's not often you will be given a total free rein. Read the brief, ask

questions of the agency, understand their motivations for the campaign, the priorities for the end client, and make it a two-way conversation. Though not always possible due to location, a face-to-face meeting with the creatives on the campaign is usually useful to discuss ideas and direction. I regularly have conference or video calls when discussing a brief with a client and follow-up calls at various stages of production when necessary. Your illustration is not the final product, being one part of a much bigger process."

As an example, Hunt was commissioned by agency Instinct BBDO in Moscow to illustrate KVARTIROVEDENIE [Apartmentology] a massive cross-media campaign for IKEA Russia. A huge illustration of ten different families and their apartments was required to represent IKEA furniture solutions suited to each family's lifestyles. The illustrations were used in a book written by Russian children's author Grigory Oster and as an online game.



07. CREATE A FOCUS

GORDON REID (WWW.MIDDLEBOOP.COM) TALKS US THROUGH THIS ADVERTISING IMAGE AND THE DEVICES HE USED TO FOCUS THE VIEWER'S ATTENTION ON THE PRODUCT



Add in elements: There was a pretty short brief for this project. I was basically given the word 'brainy' and asked to elaborate on that in my style, adding more literal features to the illustration, like cogs, just to take the piece one step further from being completely random and help in illustrating the point for the piece

Draw the eye: Another technique I used to draw the eye to the centre of the page was to collage diamond shapes on either side and have them directing the eye to the centre of the page. Using these directors should subconsciously draw the eye to the middle of the page where the product is, but also be another point of focus in getting attention

© Middle Boop Ltd

Add focus: These stripes of colour were added to the illustration late on in its creation as a way of drawing the eye to the focal point and centre of the piece. Using these sorts of devices is a good way of making sure the viewer looks in the right place

Put the product centre stage: This is the most important piece in the artwork: the product itself. This takes hierarchy over everything else. It's all well and good creating a beautifully rendered piece of artwork, but if the message or product gets lost, it becomes a very ineffective piece of advertising

Be bold with colours: The use of colour is a majorly important factor in my work and definitely for a piece like this. Effective use of colour is what draws the eye, captures the attention and will make the product stand out on the shelves

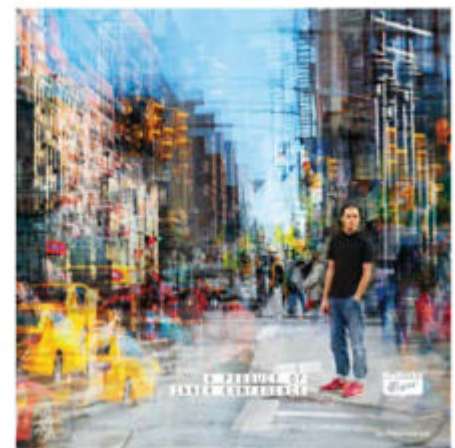
08. TELL A COMPELLING STORY

Tom Nicklin is a creative at LOVE (WWW.STORIESBYLOVE.COM), an agency that has "storytelling at the heart of our approach". Being able to communicate a story through visuals is an important part of creating an exceptional advertising image: "Imagery is a universal language. And, when used correctly in an advertising medium, it should communicate a brand or product's story without the need for further explanation."

"An example from a recent project is the Onitsuka Tiger campaign (pictured). Most brands in the category are screaming for attention with loud,

two-dimensional fashion-orientated positioning that command the consumer to do things. But Onitsuka Tiger stands for calm, craft and design, so we created a distinct brand platform entitled *A Product of Inner Confidence*. This says it's more than enough to just be you.

"To communicate this, the art direction was to use a model stood motionless in an energetic environment. Working with Berlin-based photographer Stephanie Jung, we used multiple exposure photography to illustrate the busy world, which emphasised the calm confidence of the model, and in turn the brand attitude."



© LOVE





© Client: Canon; Taylor James

► 09. STUDIO PRODUCTION ADVICE

Advertising images often use lots of different people and skills to bring a project together. Taylor James (www.taylorjames.com) is a creative production studio, and here they explain how their workflow helps them to create striking visuals: "Developing a creative relationship with your clients is paramount. All our retouch artists maintain direct creative dialogue with our clients, so they understand the core messaging, and can sell through their ideas and justify their own

work. Sitting at the end of the production pipeline, retouch is where all the magic happens. Our shoots work like military exercises; breaking down each set in layer elements for post.

"By bringing the whole production under one roof, we can offer our clients many advantages and efficiencies to help drive quality up and budgets down. By having the full scope of skill-sets in-house, we don't have to shoehorn the wrong service or process to fit a

project. Our artists' diverse skills, knowledge and experience across all disciplines allow us to constantly remain flexible in our approach. This means our artists can continually evaluate a production from an overarching perspective and make smarter decisions along the way, to adapt their approach during a project. This broader knowledge that our artists have of the whole process, ensures it is kept optimised, efficient and indeed seamless."

10. CREATE 3D MODELS FOR ADVERTISING

Three-dimensional work is popular, as it's crisp and clean and lends itself well to commercial purposes.

Si Radcliffe (www.imaginative-designs.co.uk) is a 3D artist who understands the standard of detail and level of finish required for client work: "When modelling for high-resolution images that are used in advertising, you need to consider having a highly detailed model, bevelled edges and extra fine details that add to the overall realism of the final renders, which perhaps wouldn't have been seen on a lower-resolution image. While having the extra details in your model adds to the realism, you also have to think about longer render times, so having fully optimised scenes prevents you from wasting your time. Another area to consider when modelling is always try to model using quads topology, try to avoid triangles and n-gon's on curved surfaces as they will not smooth correctly and causes pinches and kinks in your mesh, and at 10k resolution the flaws will be seen. Plan your lighting so that it shows the model off to its greatest potential; having good lighting and materials are the key to getting photorealistic qualities in your 3D renders," he explains.



© Jose Garrido

11. USE PHOTOSHOP AND ILLUSTRATOR TO BUILD POSTER DESIGNS

JOSE GARRIDO (www.noem9studio.com) TALKS US THROUGH THIS TYPOGRAPHIC DESIGN HE CREATED FOR A CLIENT



01 | INITIAL LAYOUT To create this poster for the exhibition, The Happily Ever After, I started laying out the text in Illustrator, finding the right font and adjusting some elements to balance the composition. After that I illustrated some ornaments surrounding the type to focus the attention on the text.



02 | INTO PHOTOSHOP I copied the vectors into Photoshop to start adding some effects. I created the Bevel for the whole type composition, and also added some extra colour lighting to it. Plus, [I added] the long parallel shadow to give some depth to the whole illustration.



03 | SUBTLE DETAILS Finally it was time to work on some subtle details to bring life to the final piece: adding a texture to the background, some more lighting, minor tweaks and adding a texture to the parallel shadow. On top of everything I added some noise layers.

© Jose Garrido

12. DEVELOP ARTWORK FOR CLIENTS

EMILY JULSTROM (WWW.EMILYJULSTROM.COM) SHOWS US HOW HER ARTWORK FOR SKIPPY PEANUT BUTTER WENT FROM CONCEPT TO COMPLETION



01 INITIAL CONCEPTS

After receiving the brief from the art director, I provide the client with simple thumbnails that investigate options for colour, composition and value. All this is done while trying to communicate the most important aspects of the brief: *Alice in Wonderland*, caramel and the Skippy Peanut Butter jar.



02 TWEAKS AND AMENDMENTS

The art director returns with likes and dislikes of the original thumbnails and we proceed to the final composition after some refining. This time there is an addition of some Alice imagery and an even larger emphasis on caramel.



03 FINAL ARTWORK

I continue on to full render and begin the addition of lettering the necessary copy. I include a few more elements that visually read as *Alice in Wonderland* and eventually tweak the colour and value of those items to stand out from the background.

© Emily Julstrom



© Richard Roberts, Nick Janecki, Nick Ziemer, Carly Senora

13. BUILD DRAMA IN ADVERTISING

Richard Roberts (WWW.RICHARDBROBERTS.COM) is a digital compositor, creative retoucher and art director who uses Photoshop to create hyper-real designs for his clients. He believes that the key to a great advertising image lies in a good, original idea and excellent execution: "First and foremost, a great advertising image has a unique concept. Something that has been done too many times before just won't get the job done. It needs to be attention grabbing, new and pull the viewer into the image and into the concept. It is imperative that the concept

is executed properly, with all of the elements being as polished and as sharp as possible. Really important themes in advertising are drama, motion and general intrigue. You can make something more dramatic or hero-like by changing the perspective. Lighting can add to this dramatic element. Having a well thought out colour scheme that's adjusted to your target audience or overall theme ties everything together and unites the components of the image. When you combine these elements, you can really create a powerful image."

14. SIMPLICITY IS KEY

The best advertising images are those that clearly communicate what the client wants to say, complemented by a thoughtful and attractive design that doesn't overpower the message. "I would say simplicity is the key to creating effective advertising imagery," agrees freelance graphic designer Oliver Goddard (WWW.OLIVERJGODDARD.CO.UK). "In the age of fast-paced advertising and consumers being bombarded with images, you want them to get the message easily and quickly. Once you've done that a nice subtle undertone explaining the message further would be good. My advertising piece here shows that you can be subtle and clear at the same time. The reader sees what it costs them if they are to trespass on the railways, then they are actually shown that they can spend their money very wisely with the client."



© Oliver Goddard 2015

► 15. BALANCE YOUR TYPOGRAPHY

"Having my work based on typography most of the time, I've had plenty of situations when I couldn't decide if readability should be on top of crazy ideas and concepts for an ad. But in my personal opinion, I would always go for creativity," says Jose Garrido (www.noem9studio.com). "Typography can be so playful and impactful. You just need to think a bit harder and be careful to keep the message readable in a way that people understand it."

"Typography can be so playful and impactful. You just need to think a bit harder and be careful to keep the message readable in a way that people understand it."

"I like creating new effects using typography. It's a simple way of creating an idea just by simulating a material or an object. It depends on the project, but I usually think of concepts related to the campaign

that I could apply to a type piece. Sometimes it can be as easy as using a ribbon to create a lettering for a Christmas campaign. But others can be quite tricky to find the right one that works for the brief.

"I'm always learning about typography, you can never know too much. Something that has helped me a lot when working on type illustrations is having created my own typefaces (even if they're not perfect). That process has given me a deeper understanding on how type shapes work and how to design with that in mind."

"You can't start creating a type piece without knowing the basics about how typography works. But when you know those things, it's up to you when and how you break the rules. I don't like just working by the book."



© Noem9 Studio

16. TAILOR WORK FOR CLIENTS

Pedro Aguilar (www.aguilaphoto.net) creates striking photography for advertising campaigns. His job is to create exceptional visuals, but also communicate the message that the client is trying to get across to its audience. He is normally approached with quite a clear concept of what needs to be achieved: "When an ad agency lands a brief in front of you to release a campaign, usually there has been months of discussions between the creatives and the clients, so the idea [that's] needed to put the message across has been already clearly defined. For example, in the case of this campaign, Caixa Bank youth card, the client already has an existing product, a youth card that you can use to get discounts at concerts,

events, etc. The campaign aim was to advertise the fact that you can now have access to those benefits via its new application on your smartphone. The idea had been already developed by the ad agency."

"I'd like to think that by making an exceptional visual, the message come across the better. It is true though, that in some cases the final visuals need to go through a whole process of approval by different departments and individuals within an organisation, and this can usually have a water-down effect, as it is virtually impossible to please every taste. However, when a client comes to you, it's because they like your style and the way you do things, so you just go on working as if you were doing it for yourself!"



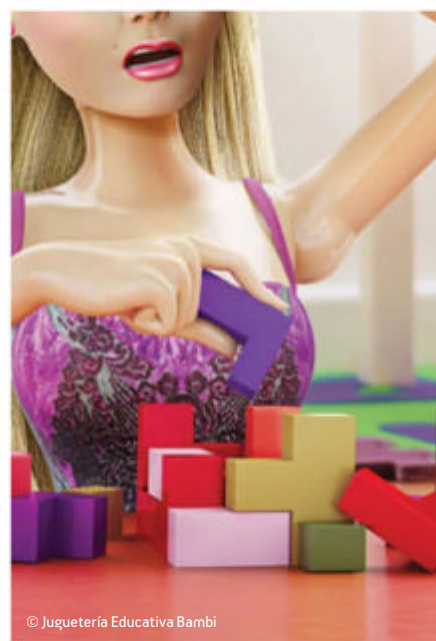
© Pedro Aguilar

17. REFINE THE DETAILS

Frank Sandres works as an art director for Ogilvy & Mather Honduras, so he knows how important it is to get the visuals just right in order to communicate a client's message, and Photoshop plays a large role in this, as he explains: "To me, one of the most important things in commercial imagery is the elegance of the visual communication. You have to focus on details, colours and the beauty of the thing that you are selling."

"To work on those refined details, one of my favourite tools is the Patch tool, because you can clean up every single imperfection without [taking away] its natural look and feel, and the result could be beyond the expected."

"Photoshop is in 80 per cent of the projects I work on, because of its versatility on different types of work: photomanipulation, retouching images, cutting or adding pieces into the artwork, 3D lettering, app design, storyboarding, concepts and so on."



© Juguetería Educativa Bambi

18. BE PREPARED TO BE FLEXIBLE

Gordon Reid (www.middleboop.com) knows that client work can offer a lot of variety, so you have to be ready to adapt: "Creating advertising imagery that's striking, effective and most importantly, leaves a lasting impression on the viewer can really come in many different forms. From something as simple as a beautiful photograph with some well-set type over the top, conveying a direct and clear message to something random and humorous or an amazing piece of illustration or type design.

"I have worked on adverts that range from embarrassingly shocking and unimaginative pieces for dry bands to carefully articulated, well-structured briefs with a good team and reasonable deadline, which have produced some exciting work, such as the Snog work. In this, the brief was very simple and was a really fast turnaround. We had three different packshots and the idea was to collage the packshots in with some fruit. I elaborated on that by creating vectors and splashes to really bring the image to life."



19. CREATE A UNIQUE STYLE



Lauren Hom (www.homsweethom.com) is a letterer and illustrator who creates typographic pieces that are initially created by hand, before being taken into digital to add the finishing touches and prepare the materials. Her work attracts a wide range of high-profile clients wanting a less digital look for their advertising materials. For this, Lauren uses Photoshop's Brush tool to create her unique style: "My top tool in Photoshop when it comes to working on commercial imagery is definitely the Brush tool. I hand draw all of my work, scan it into the computer and then take the Brush tool to clean everything up and paint in 3D elements. In addition, I use a number of textured brushes combined with clipping masks to achieve a more hand-done, painterly effect in my illustrations."

20. CREATE CONCEPTS FAST

Illustrator Oscar Llorens (www.oscarllorens.com) understands the need for speed when it comes to working for advertising clients. He has developed a workflow process in Photoshop that enables him to turn around work quickly and accurately: "My method of working is really easy. Once I have a clear [idea] what the client, usually the art director, wants and how he wants it, I use this to draw a first sketch in Photoshop at low resolution for approval. When this sketch is approved, after few changes from them I can start to finalise it in high resolution. Photoshop gives me great flexibility and speed when performing this simple workflow."

It is at this stage, when producing the final high-resolution version of a visual that Llorens takes advantage of the tools that Photoshop offers, in particular the Brush tool. “The Photoshop tool I use most is the Brush. This tool lets me work really fast, as if I was drawing with a pencil. I use vectors if I must because of the client briefing, but otherwise I always use this tool. I really love to draw and Photoshop is the only software that gives me the feeling of hand drawing. Besides liking the feeling of working with Photoshop, the Brush tool allows me to illustrate very quickly, which is really important when working for advertising agencies worldwide. Production times when it comes to advertising are usually very short, and [being] late for a delivery is a mistake that I could not afford.”



BENQ PG2401PT MONITOR

IS BENQ'S FIRST ATTEMPT AT A COLOUR CRITICAL MONITOR A MUST-HAVE PIECE OF EQUIPMENT FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS, OR JUST A SHOWY DISAPPOINTMENT? WE PUT IT TO THE TEST TO FIND OUT

www.benq.com

• £780 / \$999

BenQ has covered just about every base in the past with an eclectic assortment of monitors. They've released an ergonomic range, designed to combat the causes of poor posture and bad eyesight while working, they've conquered the gaming market with the XL and RL series, and they've even launched the VW series, designed to be the most stylish on the market.

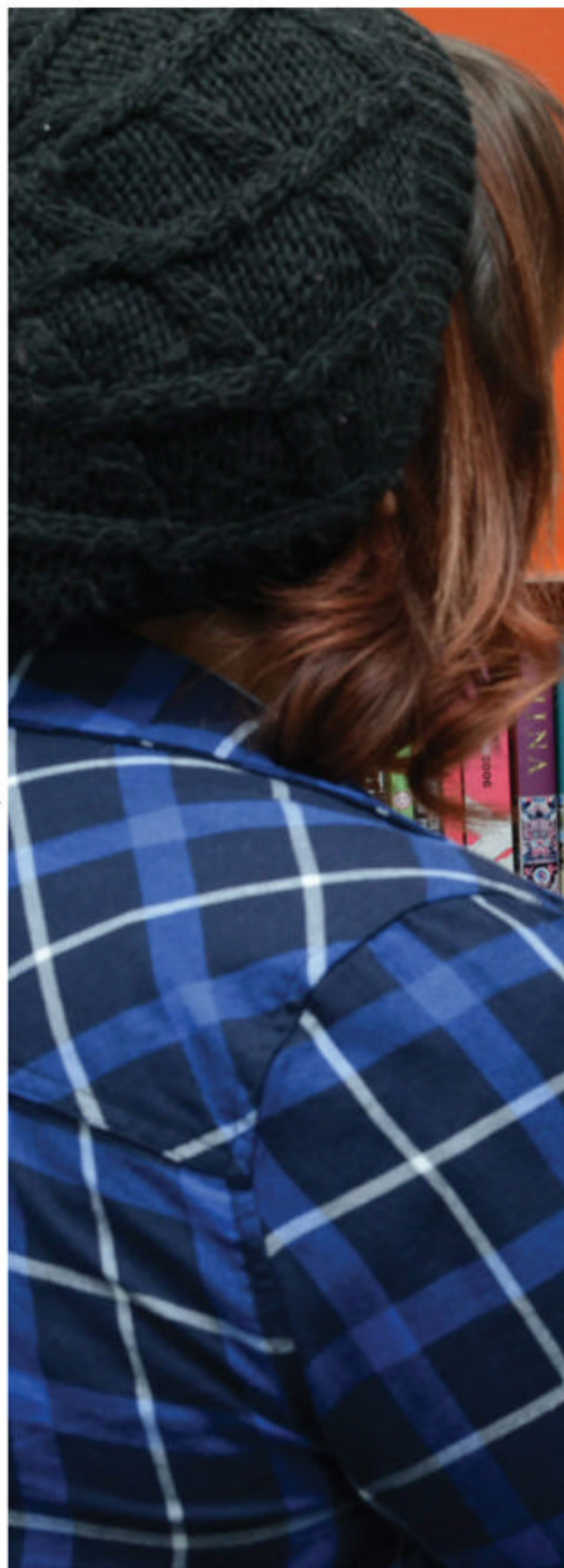
The world of colour critical monitors though, is previously uncharted territory for BenQ. We've seen monitors for moving pictures but never for still ones, and the new Pro Graphics series sees a shift towards capturing the eye of the artist, and a bold first statement for the company.

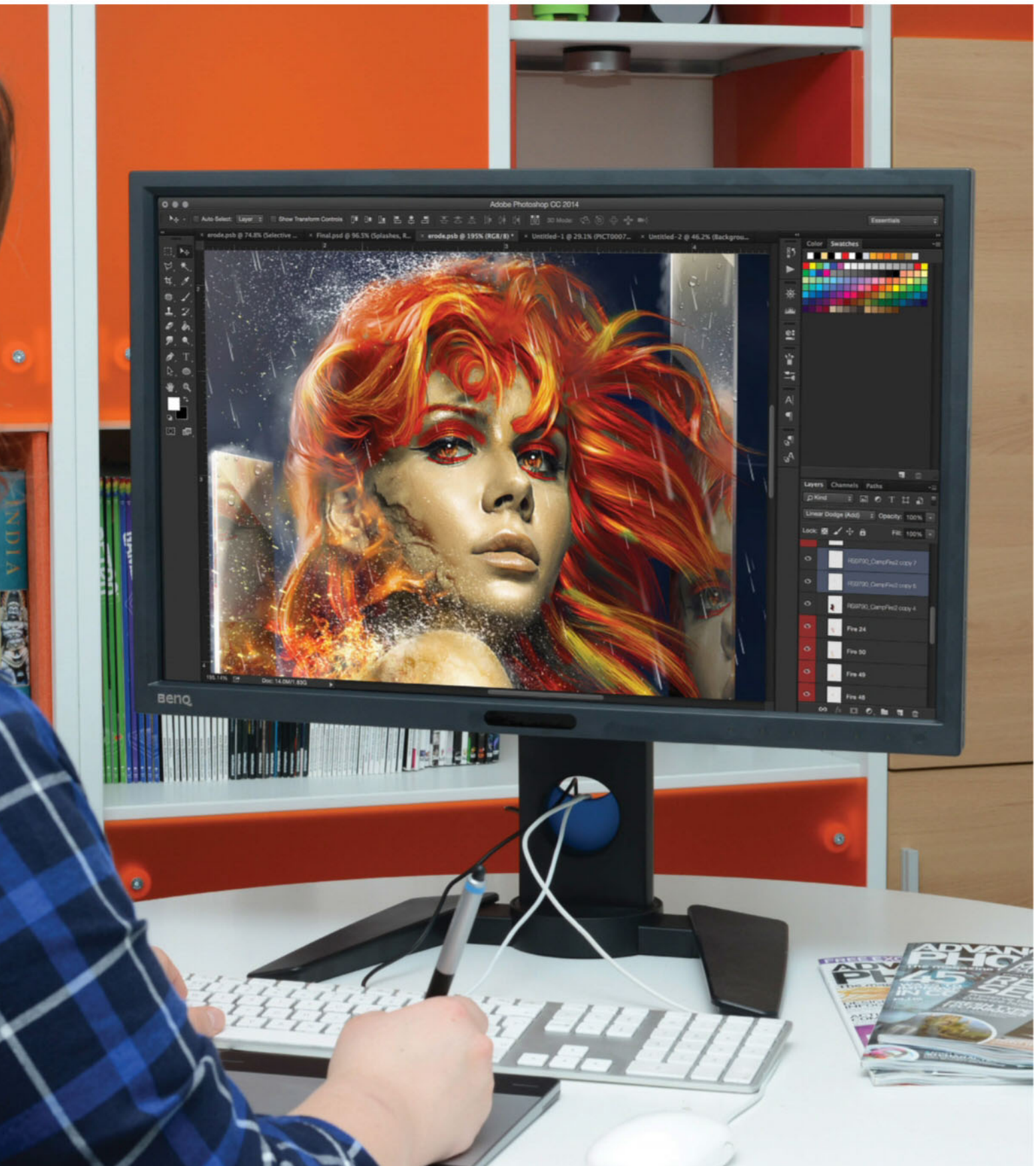
The PG2401PT is the first of a new breed. On first viewing, it has a very sleek, modern and minimal design that is in line with BenQ's classiest range. It features modern touch-operated light controls, which replace any unsightly buttons, and the all the ports and plugs you'd expect from any good monitor are all hiding around the back and sides of the machine.

The PG2401PT comes with its own sun-deflecting hood, ambient light sensor and 16:10 ratio, which offers more space for your artistic creations than the average widescreen display would. It's clearly an impressive monitor to look at, and that's merely scratching the surface. So far so impressive, but how does it actually handle the deeper needs of the artist?



Colour-critical monitor: The 24-inch BenQ has Delta Es2 to ensure colour accuracy, which gives the truest impression of colour in images







Brightness Uniformity function: Able to maintain a consistent image across the entire display, giving the user a more consistent viewing experience



Display quality: It may be 1920x1200 rather than 4k, but the PG2401PT's colour gamut more than compensates

Considering BenQ has a knack for producing consistently good monitors, it's unsurprising that the PG2401PT feels like a monitor built on experience, with some choice features specifically aimed at designers thrown in.

One of the big talking points is the 360-degree rotatable screen, which is fantastic both for a dual-display, or a single monitor. For anyone crafting a portrait in Photoshop, it's very handy to be able to switch the display to best suit your approach, and it really is little things like this that make the PG2401PT such a competent, yet user-friendly monitor.

It's the same story with the definition. With monitors now moving to 4K, the 1920x1200 display of the PG2401PT might seem modest, but the colour quality more than makes up for it. The Monitor comes with Palette Master Software, co-developed with X-Rite, and it can reproduce 99% of the Adobe RGB colour space. The monitor has an average Delta-E value of two and below, which

X-RITE i1 DISPLAY PRO



If you're looking to get the best out of any monitor, and you're prepared to spend within the region of £185/\$279, a calibrator can be exactly the piece of kit for the job.

Generally, monitor calibrators can seem both costly, and tricky things to set up, but considering

you can use the X-Rite i1 Display Pro on more than one monitor, it's definitely an investment. It can tune your new PG2401PT, bringing the colours further in touch with how they'd look in print, with gamma and contrast adjustments, and its Automatic Display control gets the job done without fiddling with individual settings.

In just over a minute's processing time – over three times' faster than many calibrators – the i1 Display Pro can reduce the Delta-E value of the PG2401PT from 2 to just under 1. It takes ambient lighting into account, and with Flare Correct, it can measure reflections on the display. If you're an artist always looking for a quick colour touch-up in your artwork, why not touch up your monitor as a whole?

means that colours are truer to life, and gradients are smoother, plus there's a 14-bit 3D Look Up Table, meaning there is a superb colour mixture with over a billion colours to choose from.

The monitor also tackles brightness in subsections of the screen's display, rather than as a whole, which means that there's more accuracy and consistency to image lightness. It's details like this that help to bridge the gap between print, and the PG2401PT's screen. On top of this, there's the option to set your own calibration presets for the monitor, which is essential for any artist.



Full range of connectivity: The screen's many ports and plugs are kept neatly hidden round the back and side



Rotation: The rotatable screen is one of the big talking points of this screen. It will give artists the ultimate flexibility for drawing and creation



Tilt: The variable angle of the screen makes this monitor ideal for home studios where lighting can be inconsistent during the day

The PG2401PT is built with all the quality you'd expect from a company that has built some of the best monitors around for the last few years. It's a sleek-looking, smooth-running machine, and the flexible tilt and rotation are huge selling points for anyone wanting to improve on how they edit in portrait format. It's a meticulously accurate monitor, with just the right number of cool extras to satisfy its user, but not too many to look like a gimmicky first roll of the dice for BenQ.

As far as downsides go, there aren't many either. It could perhaps do with a higher resolution and despite the brightness uniformity, it's not as bright as some of its competitors. That's the kind of thing that you would expect from a company's first colour critical monitor though, and it's something you'd expect BenQ to improve on in the future. Besides, it's more than made up for in that fact that BenQ is including a five-year warranty on the PH2401PT, and there's even a zero pixel defect guarantee for

your first six months of using the product.

The PG2401PT is a clear statement of intent from BenQ. It competes well against many established names, and it's one of the most user-friendly and eye-catching monitors out there, thanks to its adjustment capabilities, colour coverage and generous 16:10 display. If you've never used a colour-critical monitor before, but you're looking to take your colours a little further, the PG2401PT is the perfect choice.

VERDICT

Features: **9/10**
Ease of use: **10/10**
Quality of results: **8/10**
Value for money: **9/10**

FINAL SCORE: 9/10

CHECK OUT THE ALTERNATIVES

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A CHEAPER OPTION OR AN EXPANDED FEATURE SET THEN THESE MONITORS ARE WORTH TAKING A LOOK AT



LG 34UM95

www.lg.com

£893/\$1000 – Over two and a half times bigger than your average 16:9 monitor, the 34UM95 is lusciously spacious, with a huge 21:9 display over 34 inches: that's a 3440x1440 resolution. It has 100% sRGB, which might make it more attractive than the BenQ, but bear in mind that there's no adjustable height on it, let alone screen rotation.



EIZO COLOREDGE CS240

www.eizo-global.com

£564/\$870 – The Eizo Coloredge has a similar resolution to the PG2401PT, and 99% Adobe RGB colour space, but really excels with its wide-gamut GB-R LED backlight and colour accuracy and its sheer simplicity. It's an entry-level monitor for anyone wanting a step-up in quality, and it's a solid choice for any artist or designer.



NEC MULTISYNC P242W

www.nec.com

£710/\$749 – With considerably lower specs than any of the aforementioned monitors, the NEC Multisync's 75% Adobe RGB coverage isn't up with the very best, but it does boast a 16:10 workspace and 176 degree viewing angle. It's a robust, reliable monitor, but it is an expensive choice, considering the quality of the opposition out there.

ENGRAVER III

THE UPDATED VERSION OF THIS CLASSIC PLUG-IN ADDS FASTER PROCESSING, NEW PATTERNS AND MUCH MORE

www.alphaplugins.com

PLATFORMS:

- Mac OSX
- Windows 7/8

£49 APPROX
\$74.99

Retro printing styles are perennially popular, but re-creating the look of lithographs, etchings and engravings in Photoshop can be a time-consuming process. To re-create an old-fashioned print style from scratch you need to build up a set of digital plates, which can be almost as long-winded as real-life screenprinting (and to be honest, less fun).

That's where Engraver III comes in. The third iteration of this engraving filter from Alpha Plugins introduces multilayer support, which takes it out of the world of simple filters and into the realm of real creative control. You can build up intersecting layers of crosshatching or etching lines, giving you the look of a realistic engraving in under half the time it

would take to work up this effect from scratch. Understandably this can increase the amount of time it takes to render your effect, but the good news is that Engraver III has also introduced faster processing speeds. The new engine is powerful enough to let you preview effects at high resolution and only lags behind true real-time pre-visualisation by mere seconds.

There's a huge range of different effects in there too, complemented by a plethora of controls that let you manage line weight, spacing, angle and much more. Previous versions boasted a good amount of these, but version three has introduced even more. Of course, one of the risks when it comes to filtering is uniformity, but Alpha Plugins has thought of that

VINTAGE ILLUSTRATION STYLES MADE EASY

HOW TO USE ENGRAVER III AND PHOTOSHOP TO ACHIEVE A MID-CENTURY BOOK COVER LOOK



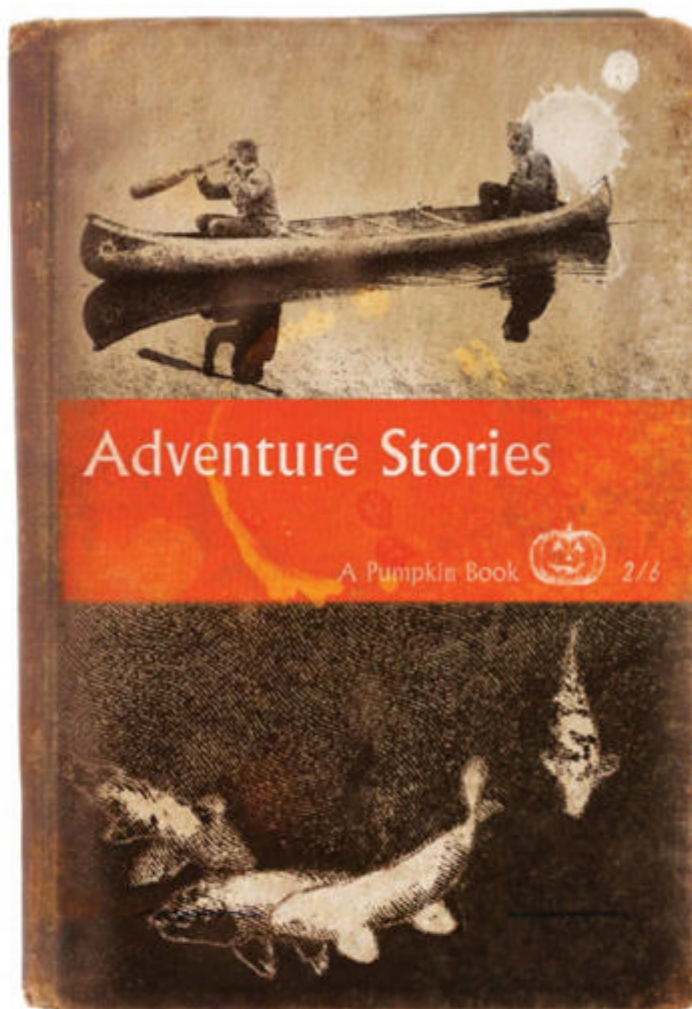
STARTING POINT

A retro-style illustration needs the correct base to make it look authentic, so to pay homage to 80 years of iconic book jacket design from Penguin, our starting point is a rather beaten-up book cover sourced from www.CGTextures.com.



IMPROVE THE ENGRAVING

One of our engraving-filtered images is placed onto the book jacket. Some areas have lost detail because of the filter, so we make a desaturated, inverted Glowing Edges layer that replicates line art and use a grungy brush to bring back edges and details so the illustration retains its bold monochrome look.



PLACE ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS

We place our second engraving-filtered image and use a rectangle of orange to divide the two – this will form the book cover's title plate later. Use duplicates of the book cover texture set to Overlay over the artwork and title plate to retain the distinctive marks like the coffee ring, which adds authenticity to the design by making it look old and well-loved.



FINAL TOUCHES

Retro-inspired typography and decals finish the title plate, while grungy brushes masked onto texture overlays add and subtract wear and foxing around the design and give the look of a 60-year-old, well-loved book. A final touch of Dodge and Burn enhances the coffee ring and other blemishes and brings the whole design together.

TOP 5 ENGRAVER III EFFECTS



ANCIENT PRINT

This go-to preset is effective for all kinds of engraving-style artwork, from re-creating retro-style illustration to working up a realistic money look. Experiment with the settings for complete control.



CROSS WAVES ACCENT

Get a Sixties-style look with this wavy halftone setting – it's perfect for re-creating Pop or Op Art styles or for creating a deliberately cheap and pulpy printed look. Try with a scruffy paper texture for poster designs.



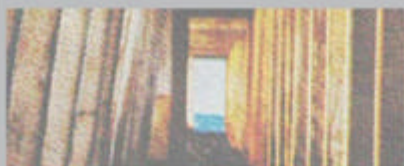
ENGRAVING COLORED

This preset is good for reducing saturation and adding warmth and a low-dpi look. It's also great for popping highlights into a blown-exposure effect. Try it for surf or skate artwork for a classic Californian style.



ENGRAVING PAINTED

This colour effect adds a painterly wavy texture that's also good for creating a deliberately grungy print. Give it a try on t-shirt artwork if you want the design to look pre-loved and worn-in or replicate the look of a peeling print.



HALFTONE MIDDLE CMYK

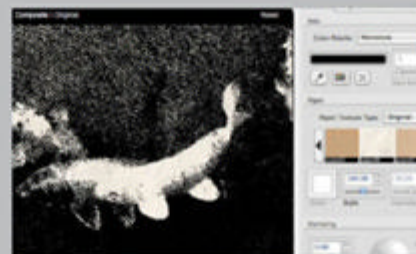
This slightly bleached-out colour halftone is excellent for adding an authentic look to backgrounds or colour highlights in manga artwork or for achieving a cheaply printed comic-book effect. Try it on full-colour pages or character designs.

CREATE RETRO-STYLE ENGRAVED ILLUSTRATIONS

COMBINE ENGRAVER III WITH TEXTURES AND TYPE TO CREATE A CLASSIC MID-CENTURY LOOK

01 CREATE THE ENGRAVING

Open a suitable image in Photoshop – it needs to have strong, clear definition and good contrast to work best. Duplicate the background layer and desaturate. Adjust Brightness/Contrast or Levels if necessary. Go to Filters>Alpha Plugins>Engraver III and choose Ancient Print. Adjust the settings as required, then choose Paper 04 from the Effects menu. Click OK.



02 BEGIN TO COMPOSITE

We've used a book cover from www.CGTextures.com to create the look of a Fifties style book jacket. Place the engraving image onto it and mask or trim the edges to fit. Duplicate the original photo layer, desaturate, go to Filter>Filter Gallery>Stylize>Glowing Edges and set Edge Width: 3; Edge Brightness: 11; Smoothness: 10. Invert, then go to Layer>Layer>Layer Mask>Hide All.



03 FINALISE THE DESIGN

Place the masked Glowing Edges layer above the engraving filtered layer, then grab a Pastel or Pencil Brush and, working on the layer mask, use it to bring back detail in any areas where the engraving filter has obscured them. Finish up with vintage typography and grungy paper texture overlays to make the artwork look authentic.

“The third iteration of this engraving filter from Alpha Plugins introduces multilayer support, which takes it out of the world of simple filters and into the realm of real creative control”

too. Randomisation controls allow for deliberate 'printing errors' to be introduced – the look of too much ink, too little, or a fault on the plate – features that give old-fashioned engravings and etchings their charm and character. These too are fully configurable, although the best way to approach them is perhaps trial and error – this is the kind of style where happy accidents can reap real dividends in the final artwork.

Controls can look complex at first, particularly when you're presented with a host of options and numerical values. They're clearly labelled though and the speedy preview system allows you to see what effect changing the settings will have on your artwork, making this a powerful but not overly complicated plug-in. If you're into the look of antique and retro printing technologies – from the 16th Century to the Seventies – then Engraver III will give you just as much control over creating

them as if you'd built the effects from scratch yourself. The only difference will be the increased speed of your workflow.

VERDICT

Features: **9/10**

Ease of use: **8/10**

Quality of results: **9/10**

Value for money: **7/10**

FINAL SCORE: 8/10

Engraver III has one job, and it does it well. Don't expect to be able to just set and forget it though – for best results you'll need to build up your vintage effects using both this plug-in and Photoshop's tools.

DRAWING FROM THE SOUL

BORN ON A REMOTE RUSSIAN PENINSULA, NATALI KAYUROVA BRINGS A RUSTIC MAGIC TO HER DIGITAL PAINTING

Natali Kayurova's digital art is founded on her early childhood memories of growing up in the incredible landscapes of Eastern Russia. Kayurova has been trying to re-capture the astonishing scenes of her first home ever since, and in doing so has introduced a breathtaking sense of wonder and magical charm into her digital paintings.

HOW DID YOU BECOME AN ARTIST?

My story began in a world completely different from our modern one. When I was born, 22 years ago, the stars formed a big letter N in the sky so my parents called me Natali. When I was a child, I was surrounded by marvellous mountains, geysers and valleys, there was always an endless sky above my head, which I felt like I might drown in. The name of this tiny planet was Kamchatka [an Eastern Russian peninsula]. My family moved to the big city where the concrete jungle atmosphere was drastically different from the sense of

freedom, lightness and infinite space around me in Kamchatka. And only by drawing was I able to return myself into that world. Since then I found myself attracted by the world of art. Gradually I began to draw portraits, still life and simple landscapes.

I often visited some plein air sessions with a professional artist. When I asked her how she drew, she wasn't able to explain a thing, so she let me watch the process. I realised that one of the key factors for learning is watching. So I would watch the way she handled the paper and the way she drew the lines. I started to do my own sketches, which got better and better over time, and after a while, the artist joined me in plein air sessions just to watch the process of my work.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE?

I like oil paintings because you can feel the texture of the picture and see every line made by an artist. In the sphere of digital art, generally, it is uncommon, so I



OUR READER
NATALI KAYUROVA
[advancedphotoshop.co.uk/
user/Santella](https://advancedphotoshop.co.uk/user/Santella)



Dog Fin: "Now I'm not doing freelance, I drew a series of personal works that tell [a story] about the beautiful world in which I lived," says Kayurova

All article images © Natali Kayurova



“The concrete jungle atmosphere was drastically different from the sense of freedom, lightness and infinite space around me in Kamchatka. And only by drawing was I able to return myself into that world”


Light of reason: Kayurova's work spans nature and technology, and she still has gaming ambitions too, "I want to make a small 2D (with parallax) platformer for consoles such as the Nintendo 3DS, which tells an interesting story, has animations, beautiful backgrounds and exciting gameplay"



Oblivion: This piece showcases Kayurova's fascination with the folklore and imagery of her Russian heritage

Moon: This piece depicts a fabulous imaginary world drawn from mythology and influenced by folklore





Grandma: Kayurova's brother gave her a tablet, and she says, "[It was] then the days of my bright creative activity began. Through permanent practise, I became more familiar with the different materials and painting techniques"

“ Find the subject that is the most attractive for you. Then the process itself will inspire you and will bring you joy. If you put a bit of your soul in the picture, you will make it ”

wanted to try to combine those two art movements, to enhance my abilities in classical painting, but also not to deviate from my style.

YOUR WORK HAS A WONDERFULLY RUSTIC FEEL, HOW DO YOU ACHIEVE THAT WHEN WORKING DIGITALLY?

I practise a lot on paper and sketch with pencil and oil. I got acquainted with Photoshop about four years ago, but I still find new things in the program to try and new techniques in painting to experiment with. I aim to make digital paintings that look similar to my previous works on canvas, to achieve this I use custom brushes and filters.

HOW DID YOU START WORKING AS A PROFESSIONAL ARTIST?

I always followed the principle that there must be something more than just having a commercial benefit to your work. I think it is great when an artist is motivated by this idea. For example, I was always attracted to monumental painting, so I painted the walls in the concert hall of Moscow back in 2010. Then I wanted to broaden my horizons and try my hand at being in a huge company and become part of a large team of developers. I got a job at **Wargaming.net** as an artist. It was great, I received lots of experience and made some new friends. It became obvious though, that I had to move on, so now I work with the brilliant people in the school of computer graphics, CGTarian (www.cgtarian.com), as an instructor in the basics of drawing.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE TEACHING WITH YOUR PERSONAL PROJECTS?

The course lasts for eight weeks, and runs every three months. The students have lectures and online

DESIGN TIPS

KAYUROVA EXPLAINS HOW SHE INSPIRES HER STUDENTS

"Study classic paintings by the old masters," advises Natali Kayurova, and "don't be afraid to make mistakes." Crucially, find something to get involved with. "Find the subject that is the most attractive for you," she says. "Then the process itself will inspire you and will bring you joy. If you put a bit of your soul

in the picture, you will make it." Much of Kayurova's work is an echo of all life on Kamchatka, with Kayurova noting that when she paints where she grew up she does not "need to invent, because I have lived in this atmosphere for a long time - all that is in my mind just bursting onto the canvas."

Kamcha: Kayurova makes good use of Photoshop's layers and custom brushes



meetings, I then explain the lectures further and answer their questions. At the end of the week, students send me homework, which I check and review for each of them. Students often write to me and ask for advice about something they are finding difficult at various times during the week. So I have no set timetable for school, it is just a part of my life. I have not been freelancing, which means I have roughly three days for personal projects.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

I draw inspiration from different sources. It can be good music, work by famous artists of the Renaissance, and sometimes fiction. I might even see some amazingly beautiful and complicated natural phenomena just walking down the street. I like the fact that I can express my emotions through drawing. It's very difficult and exciting to make a static picture alive and full of sense and feelings.



Russian Stuff: Not everything Kayurova creates is inspired by fairy tales, as seen here

GATHER THE PROJECT MATERIALS

MATERIALS YOU CAN USE TO CREATE AN IMPASTO EFFECT

Acrylic paints will work for impasto but only if mixed with a gel medium to thicken them, otherwise the texture won't hold

Gouache is like thick watercolours and can be used too, but is a bit pricey for the amount you get

Oil paints are the traditional impasto tool, you can mix crushed oil pastel with them to create a more textured feel

Whichever medium you choose, you will need brushes, a palette knife and a durable surface such as a canvas

IMPASTO PAINT EFFECTS

LEARN HOW TO CREATE TRADITIONAL PAINT EFFECTS TO USE IN YOUR DIGITAL ARTWORK

One of the main concerns among artists using Photoshop is that their work won't look real enough. One of the most interesting parts of traditional art after all is being able to see how it was created, the brush strokes and texture they create give extra depth to a

piece of art. Impasto is a technique used by painters to give their paintings extra dimension and a bolder appearance. Impasto is an Italian word that means "dough" because of its thickness. When impasto painting, artists often use a palette knife to spread paint thickly over a canvas, leaving strokes visible to

enhance the feeling of the piece. These paintings often use a lot of paint and therefore take a long time to dry: impasto is usually made with oil paint. In this tutorial, you'll learn how to create your own impasto strokes and apply them to your work to create a traditional impasto looking piece.

CREATING IMPASTO WITH OIL PAINT

MAKE CLASSIC OIL PAINT IMPASTO TEXTURES



01 | GATHER YOUR MATERIALS
You will need for this project: oil paints, a brush, a palette knife, and a canvas. Make sure your oils are not thinned with turpentine and are not separating the pigment from the oil.



02 | CREATE TEXTURE
Using your palette knife, scrape the paint over the canvas. The layer should be thick and uneven. Make sure you can still see the strokes when you're done. There should also be no thin, soft areas.



03 | ALTERNATE TECHNIQUE
You can also use a brush for this technique, however remember to keep your strokes visible and your edges hard and thick. Use a cheap brush for the most textured strokes.

IMPASTO WITH ACRYLICS

USE CHEAPER ACRYLIC PAINTS TO CREATE AN IMPASTO



01 | THICKEN UP
Before you begin, you need to mix a small amount of your acrylic colour with some acrylic gel medium, this will thicken it. Note that, the gel medium makes the drying time for the paint slower.



02 | MIX IT UP
Mix the gel medium and the paint together, you may need to add more medium or paint to get the right thickness. Pull the knife off the mixture; if the peaks stay, it's thick enough.



03 | EXPERIMENT WITH LARGER AREAS
Since the acrylic is still thinner than oil, don't use a brush to spread the texture. You can however create larger areas of texture as the paint is much cheaper.

▶ SPOT THE DIFFERENCES

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN USING ACRYLICS AND OILS

Acrylics and oil paints are very different. Oil paints are oil based and acrylics are water based. Oil paint takes a long time to dry and acrylics a very short time. These differences affect your impastos.

When using a palette knife, acrylic smudges will end in a fade. Oils will often end in a scrape with some texture. Think about which is most helpful in your project when picking materials

Since acrylics are water based, they wrinkle thin paper. Oils will leave a residue, which is why it's suggested you use a canvas or thick paper for your impastos

When using a brush instead of a knife for your impastos, the texture will hold better in oil paint than in acrylics, even if you use a medium

As you use less acrylics, the paint will become more transparent. Oils will often produce a splotchier, rough edge as you run out of paint on your brush

DIGITAL IMPASTO PAINTING

USE YOUR TEXTURES TO CREATE A DIGITAL IMPASTO PAINTING

Start by choosing the photo that your painting will be based on. Make sure the photo is not too detailed, impasto paintings focus less on detail and more on the colour and feeling of an image. Use the Surface Blur filter to further remove details from the photo. Open the impasto textures and isolate them from their solid

white background. Use a Hue/Saturation adjustment to fully desaturate the texture images. Layer the textures to build up an impasto base that spans the entire painting. Move the original photo layer to the top of the layer stack and change the blending mode to Overlay to allow the paint textures to show through.

Add in another layer with a Bevel & Emboss layer style and use the Impasto brushes to add in specific brush strokes along the image contours where it would make sense to have a visible paint stroke. Check out the video tutorial in this issue for a more detailed demonstration of this whole process.



► ADD EXTRA TEXTURE

USE OIL PASTELS TO GIVE YOUR IMPASTOS MORE TEXTURE



01 MATERIALS

All you will need for this are oil pastels, oil paint and a palette knife. You will need to crush the pastels though so if your knife is weak you might need to use a spoon.



02 CRUSH THE PASTEL

Using your palette knife, break off a piece of oil pastel the same colour as your paint. Then use your palette knife to crush it as fine as possible.



03 MIX THEM UP

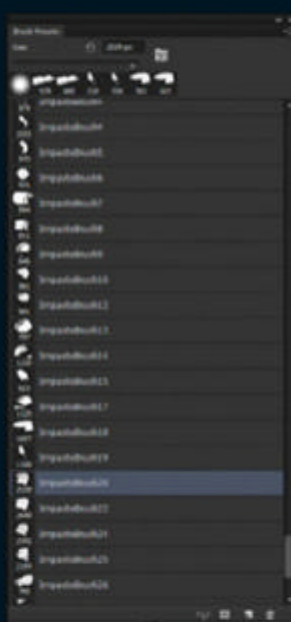
Add some oil paint to the powder and mix it together with the palette knife. It should create a thick gritty paste, perfect for even more texturised impastos.



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IMPASTO TEXTURES

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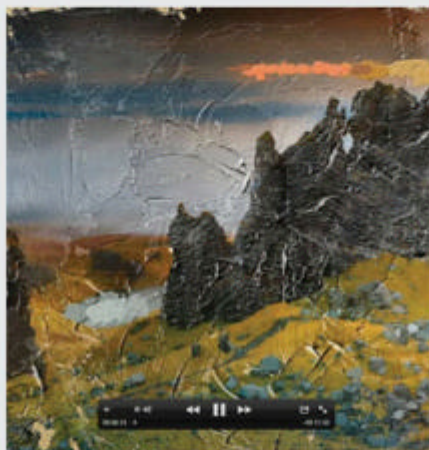
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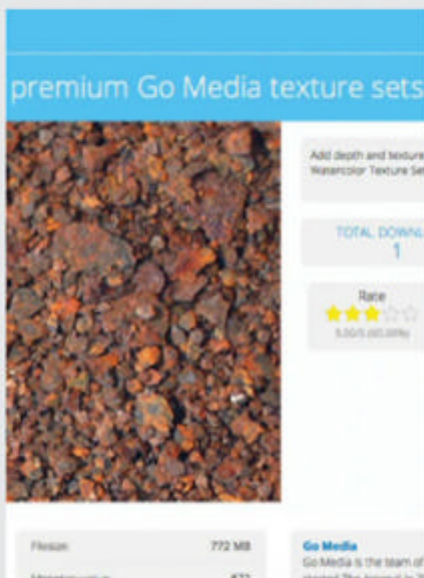
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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ACCESSING YOUR NEW DIGITAL REPOSITORY

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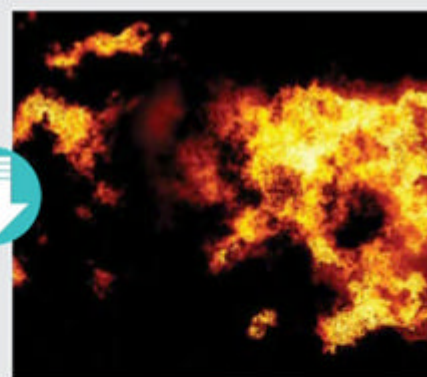
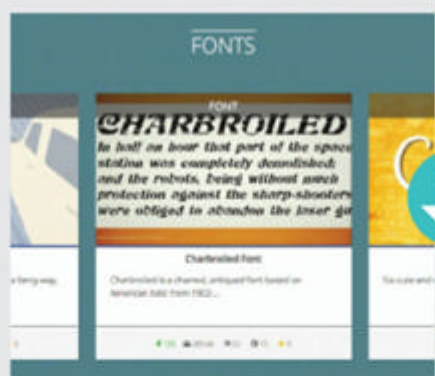
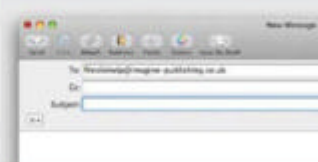


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